

# BBS

CALLERS DIGEST

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# NEWSLINE

## HAYES PAVES WAY FOR 115.2 KBIT/S AND HIGHER SPEEDS

Atlanta, GA — Hayes Microcomputer Products, Inc. announced a single port, 16-bit Hayes ESP Communications Accelerator which supports speeds up to 921.2 kbit/s. Hayes will debut this product at Windows Solutions exhibition in Santa Clara, CA on 16-18 September 1993.

Available worldwide this month for US\$99 and CDN\$125, Hayes ESP Communications Accelerator Version 2.0 is an enhanced serial board for IBM PC's and compatibles that maximizes data transmission speeds and prepares the way for high speed modems or ISDN applications. This half-card board incorporates a dedicated communications co-processor with built-in automatic flow control.

The board ensures data integrity by eliminating buffer overrun errors experienced with even the 16550 UART at speeds of 115.2 kbit/s or higher. To maximize the PC's performance, Hayes ESP Communications Accelerator provides dual 1024 byte send/receive buffers and a 16-bit PC Bus interface.

The product works with most high-speed modems and ISDN terminal adapters and is fully compatible with Windows communications software.

For further information, please contact: Hayes Customer Service, PO Box 105203, Atlanta GA 30348 or call 404-441-1617 (US) 519-746-5000 (CDN).

## NEW SERVICE ALLOWS E-MAIL USERS TO SEND FAXES

Boston, MA — AnyWare Associates has introduced FAXiNET, a service that allows Internet electronic mail users worldwide to send faxes directly

from their terminal or workstation.

FAXiNET subscribers can send electronic mail to anyone with a fax machine, regardless of whether they have e-mail capability. The FAXiNET gateway converts e-mail messages to facsimile transmissions, extending the reach of e-mail and giving users all the advantages and cost savings of computer fax.

According to AnyWare Associates president Sanford Bendremer, FAXiNET users can immediately take advantage of advanced fax features and realize dramatic savings in labor and telephone charges. "Since users can fax directly from their system, there's no lost time printing and retrieving the document to be faxed, walking to the fax machine, completing a cover sheet, and waiting for the fax to go through.

Since there is little of no cost associated with sending electronic mail, overseas users will see substantial savings over traditional international fax calls. In addition, FAXiNET offers the same capabilities as an in-house fax server, without the expense of purchasing, installing, and managing complex hardware and software."

For more information, please contact: AnyWare Associates, 32 Woodland Road, Boston MA 02130 or call them at: 617-522-8102 Fax 617-522-5734

## MODEMBASE PRO V2.0

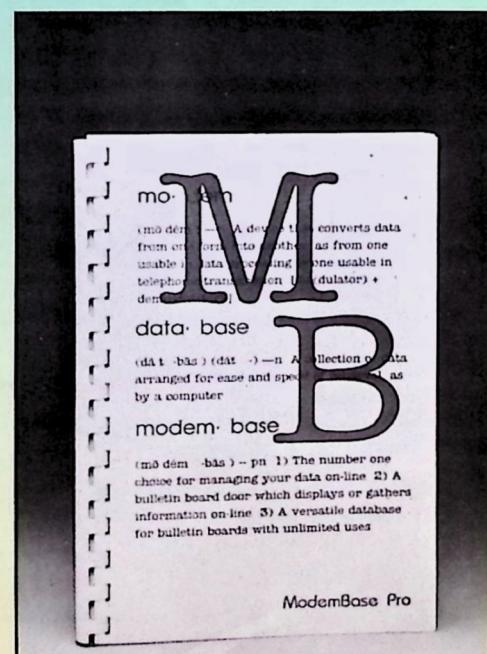
Riverside, CA — Integrated Solutions, Inc., a communications software company introduced Version 2.0 of ModemBase Pro, a database design and display program newly enhanced to work with both computer bulletin board systems (BBS) and as a stand-alone on-line software product.

Integrated Solutions announced

Version 1.0 six months ago as a third party application for BBSs and the new version remains compatible with most popular BBS software programs. No BBS is required, however, to use the new version of the software. With ModemBase Pro, the user can now easily configure most PC-based computers to answer modem calls and log the caller directly into the database or menu of available databases.

"The new version was driven by prospective customers," said Troy Getty, CEO of Integrated Solutions. "We were frequently asked for a product that would allow users to place on-line a product-and-services catalog or knowledge database without the additional log-in steps of a BBS package."

ModemBase Pro allows system operators (sysops) to create custom-designed databases and then incorporate the database into their available on-line services. The new version features a Turbo Vision interface providing a simple, mouse-controlled Windows-like working environment.



For further information, please contact: Integrated Solutions, Inc., 2995 Van Buren Blvd., Riverside CA 92503 or call them at: 909-780-8860.

## PCBOARD VERSION 15.0 SHIPPING

Murray, UT — Clark Development Co., Inc., publisher of PCBoard BBS Software which was the winner of PC Magazine Editor's Choice award, September 10, 1991, has begun shipping their new version 15.0 release of the software.

First released in 1983, PCBoard has become the most widely used host electronic information system software (BBS Software) in the world today with installations on every continent in over 132 countries worldwide.

Besides the new software features, the documentation for version 15.0 has a completely revised format to provide more detailed and easier to find information. The new 700+ page PCBoard documentation follows the current trend of software publishers in both physical size and format and is a welcome change to their previous efforts in this area!

The hottest feature of v15.0 is the optional new PPLC (PCBoard Programming Language Compiler). This outstanding product lets the Sysop

virtually re-write the PCBoard source code to meet their specific needs. Although past versions of PCBoard have been rich in requested features, one customer request has always been the ability to change the 'look-and-feel' of the program by altering menu commands, etc. This is now possible with the new PPLC.

Sysops can now add or replace menu commands, design 'intelligent' script questionnaires, attach '.PPE' applications to system display prompts, and even launch a .PPE application from or instead of a display file. The flexibility provided by the PPLC and PCBoard v15.0 are virtually limitless!

According to Fred Clark, President of Clark Development, "Our goal in the design and development of the PPL environment was to give our customers more control over their host system than any other BBS software program on the market — and to do it in a way which would be easy for even inexperienced programmers to implement.

I think our people have done an outstanding job in reaching that goal based on the positive reactions of our customers! Plus, we have many more features planned for the PPL language - including floating point arithmetic, and binary and random access file I/O."

To obtain more information about

CONTINUES...



## Rusty

Edje

Call a different kind of BBS. "We are the Friendliest BBS in the World." Our name says it all. Edie and I are a couple of burn outs from the 60's. We didn't like rules then and we don't now. Come on in and relax, you will be among friends. We have a huge adult section, including over three gigs of adult graphics, as well as a fine selection of public domain and shareware programs, including over a gig of family type graphics. But that's not what sets us apart. When you call the first time, you'll know what no amount of words can tell you, you are Home. That's right, put up your feet and enjoy yourself.

We live by three no's: "No Censorship, No Rules, No Hassle."

You'll find us like no other BBS:

- We answer your messages and comments.
- We answer your on-line pages.
- We post our address.
- We post our voice phone number.

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Hayes V-Series ..... 216-726-3619  
All (V32 etc.) ..... 216-726-2620  
Fax ..... 216-726-3595

PCBoard v15.0 BBS Software or the new PPL Compiler, CDC can be reached at: Clark Development Company Inc., 3950 South 700 East, Ste 303, Murray UT 84107 or by calling: 800-356-1686 (New Orders) 801-261-1686 (Questions) 801-261-8987 (Fax).

## SWITCHBOARD MAKES NATIONAL DEBUT

Seattle, WA — Telephone products introduced Switchboard, a phone line sharing device. Switchboard allows customers to use one phone line for phone, fax and modem, each with an individual number.

"Switchboard is the best line sharing product available today," said James Baker, President of Telephone Products. "It's and inexpensive, easy way to give a home office the professional image of a large office — separate numbers for fax and phone, with no clicks or tones to interfere with important business calls."

Switchboard needs only to be plugged into a phone jack and does not require an additional power pack. Using local phone company's "distinctive ringing" service, Switchboard automatically sends an incoming call to the appropriate phone, answering machine, fax or modem. (Distinctive ringing ser-

vices are known in different areas by names such as Smart Ring, Custom Ringing, Personalized Ring, Ident-a-ring, Intel-i-ring, Ring Mate, Multi-Ring and Ringmaster.)

Switchboard works with any combination of two, three or four devices including phones, answering machines, faxes or modems. Using only one phone line, instead of as many as four, can save customers hundreds of dollars a year.

For more information about Switchboard, please contact: Telephone Products, PO Box 31203, Seattle WA 98103 or call them at: 800-829-5960.

## VERSION 6.12 OF THE MAJOR BBS: DIGIBOARDS, "QUICK START BOOKLET"

Fort Lauderdale, FL — Galacticomm started shipping v6.12 of The Major BBS. The latest release provides full support for non-intelligent, multi-port serial cards, such as Digiboards. It also includes a new "Quick Start Booklet" to introduce novice Sysops (System Operators) to the basics of running their first BBS.

Previously, Digiboards could only be used with The Major BBS if one channel group was dedicated to each

individual port on the card. Since there are eight channel groups, Sysops could only support up to eight simultaneous users with one Digiboard. With the GalactiBoard and GalactiBox, Galacticomm's own multi-user hardware solutions, Sysops could "stack" a bunch of channels in one group. This was not possible with other hardware because cards like the Digiboard did not use the same I/O address offsets for their ports.

But now, with version 6.12, there is a new configuration option in each channel group ("Hardware Setup" from the Introductory Menu) that allows Sysops to specify the offset of stacked channels for that group. Now eight or more Digiboard channels can work in a single channel group, freeing up the other seven groups for other modem hardware, LAN channels or an X.25 card.

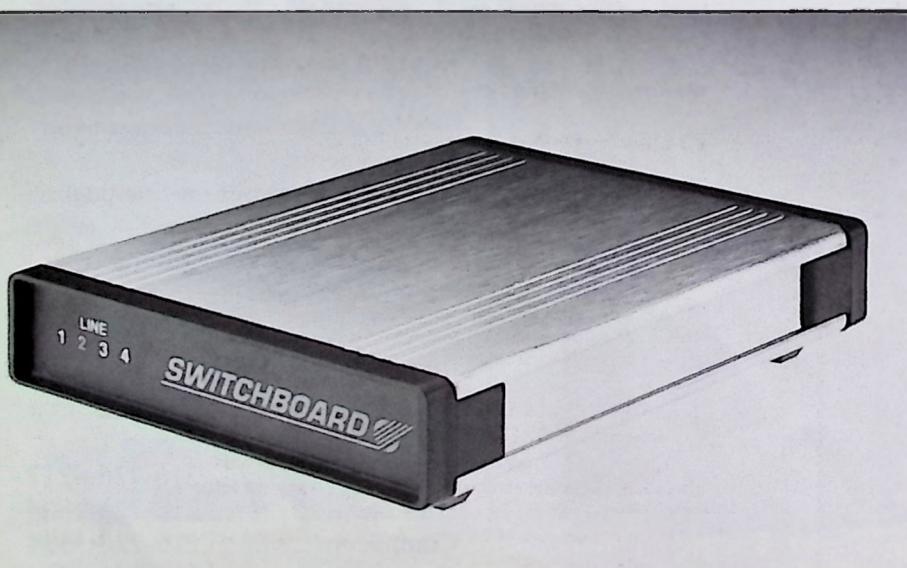
Other enhancements in Version 6.12 include dramatically improved file transfer performance, official compatibility with LANtastic Version 5, a new version of GHost (Galacticomm's "door" interface program) with support for intelligent Digiboards and the latest "door" model files, use of PharLap 3.0 for more efficient protected-mode operation, a simplified BBSetup to auto-configure modems and more.

For further information about the new 6.12 version of The Major BBS please contact them at: Galacticomm Inc., 4101 SW 47th Avenue, Ste 101, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33314 or call them at: 305-583-5990 (voice) 305-583-7808 (BBS) 305-583-7846 (Fax).

## ZyXEL BUNDLES HIGH PERFORMANCE MODEMS WITH VOICE/FAX SOFTWARE

Anaheim, CA — ZyXEL, a leading supplier of high-speed land and cellular modems and compatible products, announced that it will offer bundled voice/fax software with its entire line of high speed modems. ZyXEL previewed the three telecommunications applications at PC Expo, in July at New York's Jacob Javits Convention Center.

The ZyXEL voice/fax packages offer performance and features that were once only available with sophisticated



network voicemail systems, such as integrated voice and fax line sharing, call forwarding, remote access and private mailboxes, in an easy to install, easy to use, desktop solution for smaller companies.

Unlike many communications programs which simply convert DOS software to graphical environments, the ZyXEL voice/fax applications were written from the ground up, specifically for each operating system. ZyXEL thoroughly examined the best voice/fax applications available for each platform and selected three integrated programs that leverage the benefits of Macintosh, DOS and Windows.

"With the new voice/fax software," said Munira Brooks, Marketing Manager for ZyXEL, "every ZyXEL user will have a full-featured voicemail and integrated fax solution which takes advantage of the platform it was designed for, rather than a compromised composite program for all platforms."

For more information, please contact ZyXEL, 4920 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim CA 92807 or call them at: 714-693-0808 (Voice) 714-693-8811 (Fax) 714-693-0762 (BBS).

## GUIDE TO PUBLIC ONLINE SERVICES

Ft. Lauderdale, FL — The global electronic village is waiting for you to explore, and Galacticomm's FREE *Guide to Public Online Services* is your map.

When you receive your FREE *Guide to Public Online Services* from Galacticomm, you will open the door to a world connected by modems and computers and populated by many different kinds of people. Set up a tee time for your next vacation, join a Star Trek Forum or take a virtual tour of San Francisco. Bulletin Board Systems can also provide 24-hour customer support worldwide as well as real-time meetings among people separated by thousands of miles. Anything is possible in the world of BBSing.

Many companies have listed their customer support BBSes in the guide such as Logitech, Gateway 2000, Lynn-Western News Service, AST, Accolade, ALR, Dell Computers and Micrografix.

The *Guide to Public Online Services* is available FREE by calling Galacticomm, Inc. at 800-328-1128 between 9 am and 6 pm EST.

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(615) 966-3667

**DOORWAY**  
Program and Manual

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System Requirements: IBM-PC Compatible, 640k RAM, modem (up to 38,400 bps). Site licensing available. DOORWAY is the trademark of TriMark Engineering.

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USR Sportster 14.4K, V.32bis, W/FAX, int/ext .....	\$178/\$198
ZyXEL U1496E 16.8K, V.32bis, CALLER ID, W/FAX, int/ext .....	\$319/\$319
ZyXEL U1496E 19.2K, V.32bis, CALLER ID, W/FAX, int/ext .....	\$438/\$438

### Tape Backup Units

Summit 120MB/250MB/305MB tape backup unit .....	\$139/\$184/\$248
Colorado 120MB/250MB tape backup unit .....	\$143/\$193

### CD ROM drives

Mitsumi CD ROM drive, interface, 347ms, int/ext .....	\$188/\$265
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### I/O boards

2 COM & 1 printer port, 2 16450 UARTs .....	\$29.00
2 COM & 1 printer port, 1 16450/1 16550 UART .....	\$39.00
2 COM & 1 printer port, 2 16550 UARTs .....	\$49.00

### Software

PCBoard BBS software (2 node version) .....	\$159.00
PCBoard BBS software (10 node version) .....	\$319.00
Wildcat! BBS software (1 node version) .....	\$97.00
Wildcat! BBS software (10 node version) .....	\$197.00
RIPaint v1.53.00 - Add RIP bit-mapped graphics to your BBS .....	\$159.00
Morph, smoothly transform two or more images into each other .....	\$119.00

### Hard Drives

Conner IDE 3.5", 32K buffer, 85MB/120MB/170MB .....	\$174/\$193/\$224
IDE Adapter, 2 FDD, 2 HDD, 1S/1P/1G .....	\$27.00

### Sound Blaster Sound Boards

SB Deluxe - 8-bit digital mono sampling & playback, 11 voices .....	\$87.00
SB Pro Deluxe - Stereo support, 20 voices instead of 11 voices .....	\$126.00
SB 16 - MIDI support, 16 bit stereo sampling, additional software .....	\$179.00
SB 16 ASP - For composers, writes directly to chip on board .....	\$218.00

Budding entrepreneurs, business people looking for an edge, and the mildly curious pay attention to the following two words:

# IMAGES ONLINE

BY RICK ROBINSON

**N**O LONGER JUST A WORKING IDEA, DURAND Communications Network (DCN) has honed the technology and made it reality with DC NET v2.0.

What is it exactly? As described to prospective customers by DCN's presidents Randall Green, DC NET is a "fully functional online photograph databases designed to operate on The Major BBS and The Major Database."

In other words, a host equipped with DC NET can offer images of products, for instance, rather than mere descriptions. It's the difference between, say, radio and television.

Not surprisingly, the most informed proponent of DC NET is DC himself — chief of the company, Andre Durand:

"DC NET is our online photographic database. It is a powerful multi-line database that is 100 percent configurable to meet our clients' application needs," says Durand. Users "can create their own business database applications or can purchase one of our 'turn-key' applications [real estate, products catalog, classifieds...described later] to provide complete information database services."

By the way, DCN offers two versions of the same database program, Premiere and Lite. The latter simply has fewer functions and none of the "turn key" applications, with only one .GIF file for each database record.

Top row left to right: Steve Bonser, Sales Representative; Andre Durand, Chief Executive Officer; David Ashamalla, Software Engineer/Applications Development; Craig Wirths, Chief Operating Officer. Bottom row left to right: Paul McAvoy, Software Engineer/Applications Development; Jennifer Slavin, Director of Public Relations; Bryan Elliott, Chief Technical Officer; Anthony Salazar, VP Marketing; Charlie Colquhoun, Sales Representative.



## Details, Details

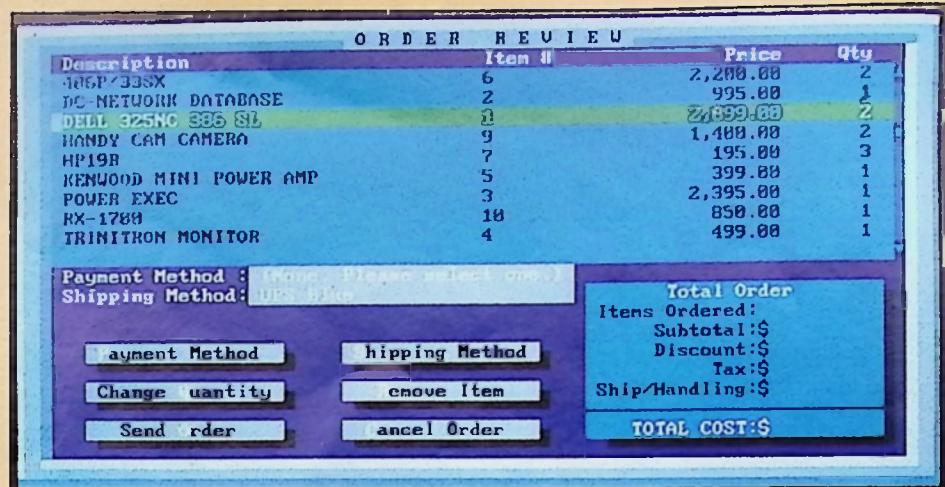
Perhaps the simplest way to show some of what DC NET offers is a sort of punch list. DC NET users can expect the following:

- Linkage of text and images to database files.
- Viewing of multiple images on or offline.
- Expanded Super VGA support.
- Resizing and moving of picture windows overlaying database text information.
- Automatic tiling of multiple images online.
- Complete RIPscript (graphics) compatibility.
- Performance of multiple key searches.
- Entrance of up to 11 search criteria for each search.
- Attachment of up to 10 images to any record (PCX, GIF, TIF, BMP, TGA and CMP).
- Printing of images on an HP Laserjet or compatible printer.
- Support for complete mouse functions.
- Viewing of multiple pages of information for each database record.
- Ability to add descriptions to each image (up to 44 characters).
- Users can be charged for each search performed.

Callers can access a DC NET board with DCN's shareware or registered copy of DC TERM (registered copy allows for an offline slideshow). With its smooth interfacing with RIPterm, DC TERM allows users to view

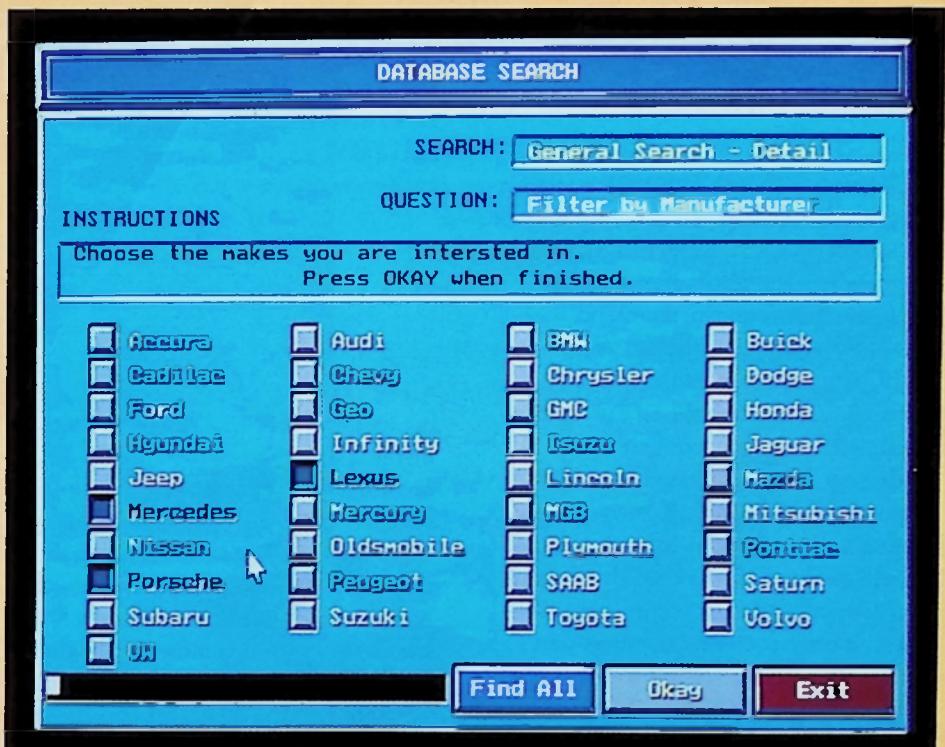
RIPscript and color images using the single terminal program. (This was not always the case in early versions). Further, DC TERM provides scrollback mode, full ANSI support (along with some VT-102 and VT-52 support), 640x480x256 color imaging, support of COM1 through COM4, pull-down menus, auto redial and plenty more those wishing to customize.

For the novice it is complete ease of use — all is operated with mouse



System operators can configure DC NET v2.0 to do the work for them. Here, the program takes orders, asking only mouse clicks from callers.

Databases have a new physiognomy under DC NET. Filtered searches are allowed for with the result offering photos rather than mere text.



clicks. For the initiated, there are plenty of remodeling opportunities.

As for viewing material, DCN supplies several turn-key applications (at an extra fee). These include Residential Real Estate Availability, Commercial for Sale Real Estate, Video Catalog, Contacts Phonebook, Auto Seller and Commercial for Lease Real Estate. Following a few online instructions, callers can access these data-

bases and whirl through "pages" of listings. Going a step further, REALVISION, an additional database application, is a "high-end, remote access real estate program which offers multiple database applications, security level access and more robust database search features," notes Durand.

Other offerings include PTS

CONTINUES ...

## PRODUCT INFORMATION

Mfg Name: MAGNUM  
 Mfg Model #: 42  
 Mfg Item #: 1823  
 Color: BLACK  
 Size: Mens

Retail:\$69.25  
 Sale Price:\$49.95



Main Detail Feature  
 Exit Rev Images Print Order Exit

(Personal Tracking System) and OrderEntry. PTS is a stand-alone, local database for creating electronic personal directories. OrderEntry allows users to create electronic product catalogs from which buyers can search, view and order products while online.

DCN is able to offer the images online partly through the use of its own highly effective compression utility. With most images reduced to 8k-15k, there's not much waiting. Images are downloaded to the screen swiftly after just a couple clicks of the mouse. Quality differs depending on the compression settings, of course, but for the most part photos we saw were of fair to good resolution and crispness.

## History

Durand came to the database-imaging field by way of something a little less synthetic than pixels and modems. At 19 he entered USCB in Santa Barbara as a pre-medicine biology student hoping to one day become a doctor. As things turned out, however, it was Durand's free time that seemed to bear the most fruit.

"I spent all my spare time learning about IBMs and playing with my com-

puter (bought that same year as a student)," said Durand. "After finishing my biology degree I realized that a medical career was not for me and I obtained a second degree in economics with an emphasis in accounting."

In the flux, Durand concluded the only thing definitely in his future was computer software... "this is when I began to seek programmers to begin the DC NET project. I worked nights and weekends on the technical specifications of the software and business plan while also developing a relationship with several local DOS programmers."

The accounting degree in his pocket, Durand toiled for one of the big six in Los Angeles while again reserving evenings for the software development. Then came his first BBS experience: It was GAIASYS in Santa Barbara run by Bryan Elliot (now

Chief Technical Officer for the DC NET Photograph Database Product) and Durand was instantly struck.

"Immediately, I was taken by the possibilities of the BBS and imagined numerous business applications for the technology," said Durand. "At the same time, I had been researching the developments in image compression and ultimately concluded that a database could be developed which complemented BBS capabilities with such features as online picture viewing."

His mind set, Durand moved to create a company focusing on two distinct aspects of the software industry: the provision of retail consumer software and the development of business information services. "Fortunately, I was able to convince Bryan Elliot to team up with me, and my longtime friend Craig Wirths, to form Durand Communications."

Next, Durand secured financing from "business associates attracted to my vision and I opened a small office suite in Santa Barbara. Right away my energy was focused and DC Software (today Synergy Communications) was formed.

Then in 1991, Durand and his team focused on the design and development of retail software programs, written in cooperation with several DOS programmers they'd met along the way.

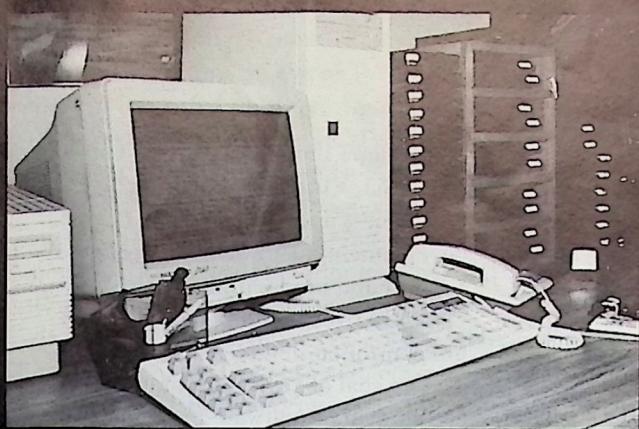
The first products, released in the fall of 1992, included DC Menu, DC CAD, DC Zipper and DC File. (All are still available on CompuServe and Synergy). And by this time work was under way on the first DCN program, an online commercial real estate program for Santa Barbara brokers. The aforementioned REALVISION was the product, and for the brokers it meant an online database with complementing photographs for each property.

"Our original intention was to develop the database as an information ser-

CONTINUES ...

...a host equipped with DC NET can offer images of products, for instance, rather than mere descriptions. It's the difference between, say, radio and television.

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You started out to build a multi-user BBS. You had dreams about the service your system would provide to your callers, the problems you would solve and the money you would make. But you didn't bargain for the pile of hardware you would live with every day and now it controls your life.

As you compared the prices of software you missed the fact that the design philosophy of BBS software forces many hardware decisions on you. When all costs are considered TBBS is ALWAYS the least expensive way to build a full function multi-user BBS. And ONLY TBBS allows you to achieve high performance with 64 high speed lines on a single CPU with NO custom hardware.

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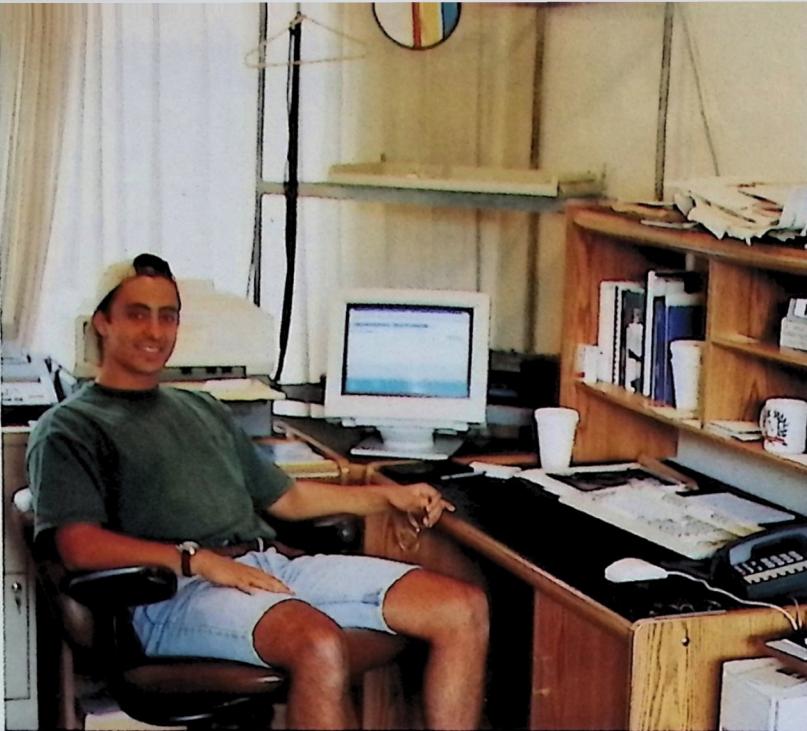
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100

MULTI • USER BBS SYSTEMS



vice and its design was to operate on The Major BBS and Major Database," Durand said. "Bryan created expanded search capabilities to the Major DB and added superior image compression routines to accommodate picture viewing. Once a terminal program was written to view photographs (DC TERM) the service was complete."

Other area brokers were awed by the search features and photos, Durand said, prompting he and his team to press on.

"In the fall of 1992 I met Randall Green, who was traveling the country as Director of National Business Development for an information services company," Durand explained. Green had spent the previous nine years developing and marketing information services (and their associated software delivery systems), an area apparently needing attention at DCN.

After Green came on board as president, the pair concluded that "we could convert the REALVISION service into a software program, hence the creation of DC NET," Durand said. And in February of this year, the first release of DC NET was ready.

## Today and Tomorrow

Today, DCN has 14 programmers, designers and personnel in two loca-

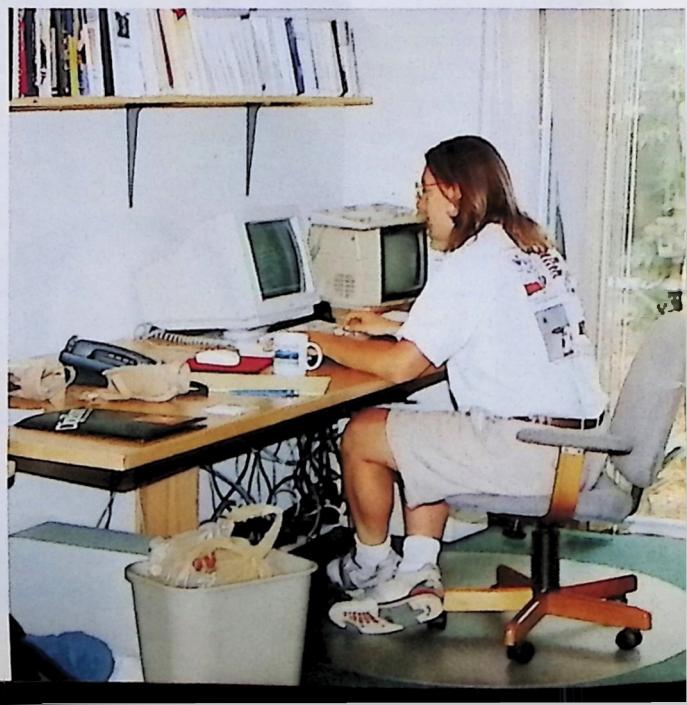
REALVISION was the first DCN program, an online commercial real estate program for Santa Barbara brokers [which] meant an online database with complementing photographs for each property.

**Bryan Elliot, Chief  
Technical Officer  
working on DC TERM  
& DC NET.**

tions, Santa Barbara in the west and Arlington, Virginia, in the east. The West Coast operation handles design, development, modifications, technical support and product fulfillment. Sales, marketing, legal and business issues are controlled in the east.

The goal of DCN, as Durand puts it, is to provide a software program that allows "business thinkers to create information services from the BBS platform."

And as of last August, the DC NET database program has helped the start-up of hundreds of businesses. Users include: "Entrepreneurs and corporations creating information systems for profit and for benefit by membership," said Durand. For instance, "United Press International (UPI) is using the program to create an online stock photography library; a private investor in Chile is creating an online trade marking verification system; UNICEF is putting their various greeting cards on a system for remote viewing and order fulfillment; a small business in Texas is putting all of its cities services into a



system for consumer access; and, a consortium in Florida is creating a database of investment and rental homes throughout the state for remote viewing by 'snowbird' prospects."

In fact, the possibilities for execution are limitless.

While working to improve its current offerings, Durand maintains an eye on the future with a bevy prospective software. Among them are a Windows application for DC TERM, lending support to a variety of multi-media, including sound files, cad files and full motion video; the release of what Durand calls a "revolutionary" image compression utility (superior to JPEG and Fractil); new designs to accommodate additional database platforms (more powerful search features and relational databases); and, complete support for all other BBS platforms.

If you would like more information on DC NET or Durand Communications Network, call the order number at 1-805-964-4899 or the demo BBS — which gives users a fair idea of what they're in for, once they figure out how to marry their modems successfully to the demo's requirements...hint: d-load the file from the main section that promises help with troubleshooting — at 805-964-2833 (2400-14,400 Baud, 8N1). ■■■■■



Charlie Colquhoun, VP/Product Development; Anthony Salazar, VP/Marketing; Steve Bonser, Marketing Rep.

## BBS Callers Digest Online!

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# Bulletin Board Systems

## as Corporate E-mail Networks

As companies and institutions gear down to weather the leaner 1990s, LAN administrators are the latest group to make creative use of a software product once thought of as a toy for hobbyists.

**C**OMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS have been communicating with each other for years using Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). The BBS dates back to the earliest days of microcomputers, and some veteran BBS operators (called Sysops) have been running "boards" (as they are affectionately called) for as long as 12 or 13 years.

The BBS is in many ways a high-tech version of the old general store — a place to socialize, play a game of cards or dice, collect the mail and pick up supplies.

As microcomputers have evolved, so has BBS software. Advances in ease-of-use and security features, along with

the advent of higher-speed modems, have propelled the BBS into the business world, particularly during the last two to three years.

BBSs began making inroads into the corporate environment as companies looked for low-cost ways to provide product support to their customers, and inter-office communication for their staff.

Not surprisingly, the first companies to pioneer the concept of the customer support BBS were hardware and software developers, who had computer literate and technically proficient customers. Today, it's unusual to find a supplier of PC products that doesn't offer a BBS as part of its customer support package.

From this base, BBSs are being adopted increasingly by every form of enterprise, especially by governmental agencies.

Another area where BBS software

*Exclusive Article to BBS Callers Digest  
from Jim Harrer, President/CEO,  
Mustang Software, Inc., Bakersfield CA.*

found a corporate niche was inter-office communication.

Many companies, for instance, employ an outside sales force which needs to be in contact with the central office regularly to transmit orders and sales leads. These companies are now using a BBS to let the travelling sales reps enter this information on their laptop PCs. They then upload their files directly to the office from their hotel rooms at night.

As BBSs established themselves in corporate environments, on-going technical enhancements made BBS software "network-aware" — that is, the BBS became able to carry on multiple log-in sessions with shared access to user and message information. Since it was both expensive and difficult to run multi-tasking sessions on XT and 286 systems, multiple phone line access to a BBS required multiple PCs connected in a local area network configuration.

To upgrade the company BBS to a multi-line system, it was usually simplest just to add a few more workstations to the existing LAN, then hook them up to modems and phone lines. It didn't take long for LAN administrators to realize that they could connect to the BBS over the LAN, instead of having to dial in using a modem connection.

This solution made it a lot easier for support staff to answer customer inquiries on the BBS since they could do it from their own desks. It was easy for staff to communicate with co-workers this way as well. Now, tech support specialists can provide direct feedback to programmers. And, product development staff can brainstorm their ideas without having to worry about scheduling their meetings around conflicting timetables.

As interest in network-aware BBSs took off, BBS developers began working on ways to provide the same level of functionality to local LAN users that modem users were already enjoying — particularly file uploading and downloading.

Another obvious step for BBS developers was to provide ways to integrate the BBS programs with more traditional LAN applications, such as E-mail. The most promising E-mail format was Novell Netware's Message Handling Service. MHS was already supported by

many of the most popular LAN E-mail packages, either as a native format or as a common interface.

In early 1992, Mustang Software, Inc. of Bakersfield, Calif. became the first commercial BBS vendor to offer a business-oriented E-mail interface to its BBS software (known as WILD-CAT!). This offered LAN administrators the ability to allow E-mail messages to be sent and received by users connecting to the network via modem. The BBS, thus, provides a secure gateway between the outside world and the LAN. Other BBS vendors have since followed with their own MHS gateways.

Far from making the BBS a sideline to the LAN E-mail system, however, many LAN administrators are finding that the BBS itself makes a first-rate LAN E-mail system.

One example of this trend is Henningson, Durham And Richardson, Inc. (HDR) of Omaha, Neb., an architectural and engineering firm with regional offices located in Alexandria, Vir.; Dallas, Tex.; and Irvine, Calif. Using local and wide area networks, HDR's entire 1,500-person workforce can use the BBS, which allows them to leave messages for each and to transfer inter- and intra-office files.

Because good BBS software offers a wide range of access levels and security, many companies have opted to use the same system for secure inter-office communication, in addition to customer support.

Seiko Instruments USA, Inc., of San Jose, Calif., for instance, uses its BBS for technical support and internal communication. However, the BBS is primarily designed to facilitate communications between the home office and field technical support personnel, dealers and branch personnel. The variety of access levels allows the sysop at Seiko to keep the different uses of the BBS entirely separate, so outside callers are prevented from accessing data intended only for staff.

Using a BBS as the LAN E-mail system has several other advantages as well. To begin with, the per-user cost of a BBS is substantially lower than a traditional E-mail package (with the site license cost based on the number of

LAN connections). Another advantage is that the interface is the same whether a user is logging on locally or from remote. In addition, BBS features such as public message forums help promote work group discussions and provide an easy way to disseminate general corporate information.

Many LAN administrators and users are finding that using the BBS as an in-house E-mail system suits the way a lot of people like to work. But this solution isn't for everyone.

**It didn't take long for LAN administrators to realize that they could connect to the BBS over the LAN, instead of having to dial in using a modem connection.**

For example, if a LAN incorporates multiple hardware platforms — from PC to Macintosh to UNIX boxes — it becomes less practical to use a PC-only BBS application, especially when there are multi-platform versions of popular E-mail applications already available.

In addition, BBS technology is still in its infancy as far as sound and graphics are concerned. Many BBS packages can only display messages in a text-only format, whereas some LAN E-mail packages allow "hot links" to other applications (i.e., the ability to import a pie chart generated by a spreadsheet program into the message.)

If those kinds of specialized features are crucial for your E-mail system, you may not find that kind of functionality in a BBS package, at least not yet.

The increasing functionality of BBSs, however, as well as the creativity of LAN administrators, will continue to make the BBS an increasingly viable E-mail solution. Indeed, there is little doubt that the BBS is well on its way to taking its place along side the telephone and FAX machine as a leading business communications tool. ■■■■■

*Jim Harrer is president/CEO and chief technical officer of Mustang Software, Inc., Bakersfield, Calif., the seven-year-old supplier of the WILDCAT! bulletin board system for professional business applications.*

## Construction Net #6

Los Alamos, New Mexico

## The Real Estate Connection

Littleton, Colorado

## Night Watch BBS & Night Moves BBS

Belton, Missouri

## Access Denied Public Message System

Falls Church, Virginia



BY ALAN R. BECHTOLD

**T**HIS MONTH WE BEGIN OUR CROSS-COUNTRY TRAVELS IN NEW Mexico, a southwestern land of color and contrasts. A state where Indian pueblos and breathtaking canyons share the landscape



missile bases and atomic energy centers. This is where we'll visit a silicone-based watering hole designed for people interested in the construction industry and in computing in general. Located in Los Alamos, just west of Santa Fe, our first stop is...

## CONSTRUCTION NET #6

**SYSP:** Pam Trexler

**LOCATION:** Los Alamos, NM

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 505-662-0659

**BBS SOFTWARE:** Maximus 2.0

**MODEM TYPE:** US Robotics 19.2

**MOTTO:** "Where Construction and Computers Meet"

This is a rather unusual BBS in that the system's name implies a strong focus on one industry's needs, but the board itself deals with many interests.

Construction Net #6 (CNET) indeed has a lot to offer anyone in the construction industry and the system hosts CNET, an industry-specialized echomail network, but sysop Pam Trexler explained there's a lot more to the board than its name would indicate.

"I don't cater particularly to persons in the construction business, though you'd think that was the slant of the board," she said. Actually, according to Pam, the system's focus on the construction industry goes back to the man responsible for getting her into running the board in the first place.

"I took a course in a software program called PRIMAVERA PROJECT PLANNER, from a Professor at Arizona State University by the name of Marv Carson," Pam said. "I knew nothing about BBSes or FidoNet at the time. I enjoy computers on my own, and Marv asked me what I knew about BBSes and whether I was interested in running one. I wasn't — at the time."

About two months later, Pam changed her mind. "I contacted Marv and asked him for help getting the software to set up a BBS and sent him floppies. 40 floppies later, I had the files I needed. I set the BBS up in three days on an IBM PS/2 50Z, having never seen the terminal side of the software before. CNET is CNET because I was grateful to Marv for giving me a tool to learn more about personal computers, and he was interested in establishing a network of construction-related boards around the country."

Consequently, if you have an interest in the construction industry, Construction Net #6 is definitely a good place to call. The board is connected to a solid construction-related echomail conference that offers in-depth discussion of various issues related to the industry and computer-related software and hardware. You'll also find files in the system's download directories which will help anyone involved with the day-to-day construction business, including software to help develop and estimate bids, plan projects and design structures. There are also some demos of PRIMAVERA's products.

Outside of this rather technical specialty, however, there lies a friendly, intellectually stimulating general interest system that should please any caller. In fact, Pam said most of her system's roughly 450 users are the same as you'd find almost anywhere else. "I see quite a few teenagers, a few

older users and once in a while a few folks my age (37)," she said.

These more typical users regularly enjoy Pam's collection of more than 2 gigabytes of files, including a CD-ROM drive, offering extensive selections in categories ranging from artificial intelligence, astronomy, HAM radio, electronics and engineering to games, clip art, music, genealogy and even hobby gambling. The subject list is far too long to include here, but it's one of the nicest assortments I've ever seen on a board this size.

For example, a quick search of new additions to the system's libraries, turned up several recent issues of the popular online publication COMPUTER UNDERGROUND DIGEST and several issues of a fairly new online monthly called AVERAGE USERS MONTHLY. I also found a new offline mail reader program called DoveMail, an interesting VGA screen saver that displays funny sayings, the latest version of the popular DiskCopy diskette duplicator program, the newest edition of the top-rated shareware mailing list program Label Master, a text file describing the whole incident between Steve Jackson Games and the Secret Service and even the complete script from the movie AIRPLANE! There were also lots of nice GIF pictures, several excellent MOD-type sound files and literally dozens more. And all of

CONTINUES ...

these were placed on the system within a one-week period.

Likewise, the message bases available on Construction Net #6 reflect the diverse interests of the system's users. Of course, there is a construction-related conference, but I also found conferences supporting computer technical

**Construction Net #6 (CNET) indeed has a lot to offer anyone in the construction industry, but sysop Pam Trexler explained there's a lot more to the board than its name would indicate.**

issues, environmental concerns, astronomy, firearms, games, virus information, graphics and — who else? — Rush Limbaugh.

Pam holds BS degrees in Geology, Geological Engineering and Mining

## USER GROUPS!

If you are the President or the decision making person in a User Group, you might be interested to know that the *BBS Callers Digest* has a special program just for you!

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Engineering, and likes running a serious, technically oriented board, but she also enjoys the social aspects of sysopping. "I enjoy exploring the network, meeting others who run boards," she said. "When I was sent to Denver for the summer a couple of years ago, I made friends there before I left by

using the board. I spent my long evenings calling around and made some friends with whom I am still in contact today. I've also been adventuresome, and invited friends I've never met to come visit. I invited a sysop from Nashville for pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving a couple of years ago. Never met the guy before. He flew out, stayed a few days. I took him to my friend's for Thanksgiving dinner. It was fun."

If you hang around Construction Net #6 a while, you'll notice even the system's most technically oriented users are fun, and have some very broad interests outside of their personal specialties. "There's an astrophysicist who has Arabian horses, likes to shoot guns and brew his own beer and is expert on PCs," Pam said. "And a chemical engineer who is a wanna-be astronaut and extracts juice for wine in his washer, dries grain for beer in his clothes dryer (the latter doesn't work real well, incidentally) and makes rust in a pure oxygen environment in a kiln buried in the wood pile and plans to produce liquid oxygen with some equipment he got from salvage (for rockets?). Then there's the preacher who's into UFOs and many other interesting people."

My theory is Pam has attracted this large, active and interesting group of people to her board through her caring, pro-active attitude about telecommunications and bulletin boarding.

New callers will find a lot of useful information on Construction Net #6, from a useful list of commonly-asked questions and answers about the system and telecommunications in general, to detailed descriptions of what echomail is all about and what exactly a ZIPped file is, how to use the various download protocols and more. These are all avail-

able as easy-to-find bulletins and, of course, Pam always stands ready to help you directly, via E-mail to the sysop.

All together, this feature-rich system is a great board to call whether you're new to BBSing, are interested in the construction industry, are technically oriented by nature or just want an easy going place to hang out a while. And the best news is that access is absolutely free. Local callers are expected to use an automatic call-back verifier but long-distance callers need only leave Pam a message via a Comment to Sysop requesting access to the board.

Pam said she's a little concerned for where the BBS industry as a whole is going. "As connections to the Internet and large bulletin boards are made more available to the public, there's going to be less interest in the little hobby boards. They could become dinosaurs, like the ma and pa grocery on the corner. We're moving into the age of supermarket BBSing."

That's a valid concern — but I found hope this won't happen by calling Construction Net #6. It's a perfect example of a "ma and pa grocery on the corner" that's loaded with "supermarket" qualities and proves there is a solid need in the BBS world for both types of systems. I recommend you check it out.

After that extremely pleasant visit, it's time to move northward, following the tantalizing tail-end of the Rockies which dips into New Mexico to a state where the magnificent mountain range reigns supreme. Colorful Colorado is our next stop, a land of wondrous natural beauty, booming economic growth and home of...

## THE REAL ESTATE CONNECTION

**SYSOP:** Alisa Hagner

**LOCATION:** Littleton, Colorado

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 303-933-3372

**BBS SOFTWARE:** SpitFire 3.3

**MODEM TYPE:** Practical Peripherals 9600

**MOTTO:** "It's A Great Place to Visit and You Might Find a Place to Live Here"

Littleton, Colorado is actually a suburb of Denver. Nestled at the very feet of the glorious Rockies, this bustling cap-

ital city has experienced unprecedented growth over the last couple of decades. There is currently a major migration of people flooding into the state from California. Fleeing conditions such as overpopulation, smog and an ever-increasing cost of living, they find comfort in Colorado's natural beauty. Denver, especially, provides a comforting combination of lower-level pollution and bustling population which makes these Californian refugees feel a little more at home, with a burgeoning job market and opportunities galore to make it an attractive target of any move.

Of course, Colorado is attracting people from all over the country, too. And if you've ever considered moving to Colorado, The Real Estate Connection is one place you should call to give yourself an upper hand in the complex process of finding a place to live. But, even if you're looking for a home elsewhere, have one to sell yourself or aren't even interested in a home at this time, there's plenty on The Real Estate Connection to attract your attention.

First and foremost, access to sysop and real estate agent Alisa Hagner should prove of major benefit to any home seller or buyer who calls the system. Alisa is a busy successful Realtor who started The Real Estate Connection to share her knowledge and expertise freely and without obligation. You can ask Alisa anything and expect an honest answer. She'll of course be happy to help you as an agent, but there is absolutely no cost or obligation to avail yourself of all she has to offer on the board.

"I will research what I don't know to help a caller out," Alisa said. "Recently, a caller wanted info on a government repossessed home (HUD Home). Well, I couldn't find anything in HUD's computer, so I accessed 'Public Records' online. No such property address! (Now — how can a home exist and the county not know about it?) But, evidently, this home was built illegally! What fun! I found out something I didn't even think was possible."

That's the kind of personal help you can expect from Alisa.

"Most people will need to buy and

sell property," she said. "I decided to try to 'give back' and share my knowledge with anyone who asks. I have put purchasers in touch with sellers and helped sellers find a sale, demystifying the home buying/selling process. And I will stay out of the process if that is what the caller wants (no fees, no verification, no pressure, no guilt!)."

In fact, almost the entire BBS is designed toward helping all home buyers and sellers. In addition to message conferences dedicated to buying and selling (tips, tricks, and even actual listings), there are numerous bulletins and information files that will educate you on the entire process. Be sure to check out "Alisa's Real Estate Rules," "Alisa's Recipe for a Closing," "Before you SHOW," "Papers You Need Before You Sell," "Buyer's CLOSING CHECKLIST," and "FHA Maximum Loan Amounts & Closing Costs" on the system's Bulletins menu. This is also where you'll find Alisa's resume, address and phone number, a list of 15 FREE services Alisa offers to her callers and much more.

It's a veritable treasure trove of valuable tips and information you can access any time, without charge, at your leisure.

As if that's not enough, you can also take advantage of 11 different message conferences on The Real Estate Connection, including "Alisa's Answers," "Real News and Information," "Homes For Sale By Owner," "Townhomes/Condos For Sale By Owner," "Land for Sale," "Out of Area Properties," and more.

There are also several excellent file selections on the board's single downloads area (including real estate-related programs), along with some excellent games and leisure programs.

And, speaking of leisure, Alisa's husband, Richard, is also heavily involved on the BBS. According to Alisa, he's something of a workaholic who loves to write code. His main interest on the board appears to be centered in the area of BBS doors and he's written a number of excellent programs that

are running on The Real Estate Connection. Most of Richard's products are games, but he's also written an excellent utility that fits The Real Estate Connection's overriding theme perfectly — an online door you can use to figure what the payment on your new home purchase will be. With this pro-

Alisa is a busy successful Realtor who started The Real Estate Connection to share her knowledge and expertise freely and without obligation. You can ask Alisa anything and expect an honest answer.

gram, you can enter the home's asking price, down payment and mortgage interest and length, then it generates a monthly payment (not including taxes and insurance) and lets you know, based on your stated annual income, if this is a property you will likely be able to finance.

Richard's real forte', however, is "fun stuff." Door games you can play online. Some of these are excellent and there are plenty to choose from. Mind Breaker tests your deductive reasoning

CONTINUES...

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Prepared by the publishers of the book *How To Successfully Run A BBS For Profit*.

by asking you to enter a sequence of numbers that match the hidden sequence that is behind some squares at the top of the screen. Cross Pegs is a board game you play with pegs which are removed by jumping — the object of the game is to jump until there is only one peg left, if you can. And High-Low Cards is the popular gambling game where you guess if the next card to be turned up will be higher or lower than your own card.

One of my favorites was Richard's Dino Quest, a fascinating online adventure game which places you in the mythical land of DINO, where you must search for the 13 treasures of rule. You must battle a variety of dinosaur-like creatures and a host of even more vicious human adversaries to achieve the goal of your quest, aided at first with just a compass as a guide.

Another popular game on the system is Star Market, a galactic investment challenge where you develop different areas on a star map and try to buy and/or sell stock to increase your personal wealth. This one wasn't written by

Richard — but I noticed right away that it follows closely his standards for excellence and intriguing gameplay.

If you like the games Richard's written and run a BBS, they can also be downloaded from the board and run on your own system. If your users like them, a very reasonable registration fee will make them "legal."

All this and more for the price of a call. I'm not sure you can do much better. Even if you've never considered selling or buying a home, Richard's online games alone are worth checking out by themselves. And, no matter where you might be planning to buy or sell your home, Alisa's advice and help are worth many times the cost of a call to The Real Estate Connection. Highly recommended!

Now that we've investigated a great place to live and absorbed a bit of the beauty Colorado has to offer, it's time to move to the east a bit. Our next stop is Belton, Missouri, a small suburban community of just under 20,000 people located almost within walking distance of Kansas City. This is where we find...

## NIGHT WATCH BBS/ NIGHT MOVES BBS

**SYSOP:** David Fuller

**LOCATION:** Belton, Missouri

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 816-322-5494

**BBS SOFTWARE:** PC Board 15.0

**MODEM TYPE:** Practical Peripheral 14.4

**MOTTO:** "Night Watch — A Great Place to Call Home!"

Night Watch BBS first went online in 1991, running the shareware version of PC Board. But sysop Dave Fuller was no newcomer to the world of telecommunications.

"I had operated a BBS in Wasilla, Alaska, called BCL Public BBS, back in 1984 and 1985," Dave said. "I enjoyed working with the BBS and the users, and thought that, since I had the equipment now to run a 24-hour BBS, I would start Night Watch BBS."

Since that time, Night Watch has grown into a warm, full-featured BBS, still small enough to offer callers plenty of personal service and direct access to the sysop but large enough to offer features and services offered by boards

## ONE CALL Gets It ALL<sup>SM</sup> !!

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many times its size.

I found hundreds of interesting files on Night Watch, all neatly arranged in a single downloads directory. There were files supporting graphics, printers, operating systems, Windows, BBS programs, communications programs, languages, medical related subjects, science, electronics and more.

The number of recent uploads on the system show there is plenty of activity from the users in this area as well. One of my favorite new additions to the system is FNORDA.ZIP, a program that writes sentences which make no sense. As soon as I saw this I realized I've finally been replaced by a machine!

Night Moves will operate on the same machine and telephone numbers as Night Watch, but I like his plan to separate the two distinct categories of boards from one another, so those who enjoy such things can have them without offending those who do not.

BIGBOOK.TXT is another unusual offering. It's a huge text file of mischievous activities you'll have fun pulling on friends you don't value.

On a more serious side, I also found a great new collection of Windows utilities, the latest shareware version of Qmodem, an excellent utility which allows you to spread single large archived files over multiple diskettes, and too many more to list here. You'll just have to check out the directories yourself.

You'll also find a huge assortment of .GIF graphics files you can download, all neatly arranged alphabetically in a single download directory of their own.

Despite the number of diverse files already available, Dave explained he hopes soon to expand his system's download lists. "I would like to add a CD-ROM to the BBS so I could make a broader range of software titles and subjects available to the users," he said.

There are also plenty of message bases for callers to access on Night Watch BBS. Using FidoNet echomail technology, Dave's managed to pull together an interesting assortment of internationally echoed and locally based E-mail conferences, covering such diverse topics as aquariums, auto racing, job offerings, multiple sclerosis, doors, DesqView, HAM radio, home schooling and even the National Bitch echo and National Flame echo, where you can let your hair down and complain to the skies (and even get into a bitter argument or two just for fun).

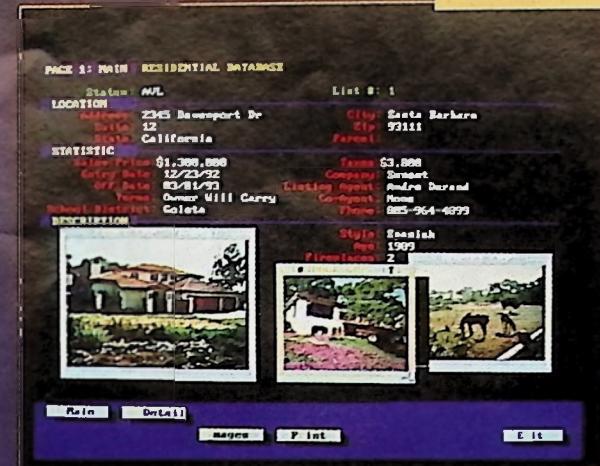
On the adult side of things, Night Watch also offers access to the popular Throb-Net adult echo conference. These will soon join adult online games, text and graphic files on another BBS Dave is creating, called Night Moves. Night Moves will operate on the same machine and telephone numbers as Night Watch, but I like his plan to separate the two distinct categories of boards

CONTINUES ...

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from one another, so those who enjoy such things can have them without offending those who do not.

"I like the echomail capability of my BBS," Dave said. "The vast number of conferences available on virtually any topic allows the users and myself to 'meet' other people and discuss the issues that are important to us. And Night Watch will be dropping all of its adult material and sending it over to Night Moves, to allow my users to have a place available to pursue adult entertainment, and a place to go for general entertainment."

It's interesting to note that, while the majority of users on Night Watch enjoy downloading all the files Dave provides, the most active users are actually fans of the popular online multiplayer adventure game TradeWars 2002. "The typical user at Night Watch is a TradeWars 2002 junkie," Dave said. I believe him! I don't think I've ever seen a more active, bloodthirsty group of games rolling along on any single BBS before.

But there's more online fun available here — even if you're not into TradeWars. You'll also find an exciting multi-player online version of Bingo. And I readily lost all my electronically allotted online "dollars" trying to hit a big Keno jackpot. There's also a BBS Bowling Alley, and the popular DollarMania Slot Machine. Or you can test your mental facilities in the StarTrek (the original television series) Trivia game. The ever-popular online adventure game Caribbean Contraband is also always available to test your skill in trading with illegal commodities.

Other doors offer access to a time/byte bank where you can store unused daily time and download allotments for later use, or gain Silver

Express offline mail reader access.

"I see the future of BBSing becoming a more and more popular way of exchanging information between people and businesses around the world," Dave said. "Telecommunications may be the 'commute' of the future, where employees can stay at home with the family and 'commute' to work via modem."

I tend to agree and, in many industries, that's already happening, although at a much more limited level than any of us would like to see. For now, however, you can console yourself with a "commute" to your favorite online hangout, regardless of where in the world you currently call home, where you'll meet new friends and play games, dig up interesting information and even download useful software you can put to work on your computer when you return home. Night Watch is one electronic hangout you should definitely check out. You might just want to call it home.

Meanwhile, however, all good things must come to an end and it's time to pack our bags and move on again. Next we continue our eastward trek, to a coastal state nestled right up next to our nation's capital. We're traveling to Falls Church, a small suburb of barely 10,000 people located just on the Virginia side of Washington,

D.C., a community that is also home of...

## ACCESS DENIED PUBLIC MESSAGE SYSTEM

**SYSOP:** James Goldbloom

**LOCATION:** Falls Church, Virginia

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 703-998-2958

**BBS SOFTWARE:** QuickBBS 2.80-GOLD

**MODEM TYPE:** Hayes 19.2

**MOTTO:** "Simply THE Place for the Art of Intelligent Online Message Making Since 1985"

This is a most unusual BBS in that sysop James Goldbloom pulls no punches about his focus on messaging and nothing BUT messaging.

"There is something lacking in many BBSes around the world," James said. "The HUMAN ELEMENT, to be specific. I like file transfers, sure, and enjoy all the wonderful technical marvels which change from day to day while calling out, and modifying my own system. I'm a programmer, and a beta-tester for my BBS software, as well as

CONTINUES ...

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the mail door I run. However, there is more. My philosophy of BBSing is that BBSes need more emphasis on messaging, and allowing a better exchange of ideas and interests which are not unique or solely dedicated to technical matters, in a balanced manner."

James continued, "I've never told a user NOT to transfer files, and actually do a lot of it myself, but I also recognize that sysops need to be friendlier to users, and users need to treat each other with more respect in many cases, and not be totally dumbfounded by the medium itself. Modems, to me, are just another way of information interchange, and access to such information is vital to the survival of our industry. We sysops cannot lose touch with what it is to be a USER."

It should be clear, from this, that online messaging is much more than a passion with James — it's a cause to which he is totally dedicated. This near-obsession stems from an early childhood experience. James was delivering newspapers. Part of his route took him through a shopping mall where the latest computer technology for the time was always on display — Commodore, TRS-80, Tandy and Texas Instruments.

James said he would often take a minute to stop and peck at the keys. "One day, upon visiting the store, I figured out how to 'abort' a program running on one of the C64 computers — an adventure game in BASIC written by Scott Adams," he said. "Within days, without management knowing it initially, I 'changed' the code of the game, putting in my own little nuances, and had it doing things the poor salespeople could not believe. It was harmless enough and, instead of kicking me out or getting me in trouble, a manager named George realized he had this kid who needed to express himself, so he gave me disks (or maybe it was to keep the kid from destroy his inventory — I'm not sure which)."

Thus, a computer programmer was born. Later, James' father realized his son was pursuing a solid interest and provided a Vic 20, then a C64 and eventually a C128 with (of course) a 300 baud modem.

"This, without a doubt, was the turning point of my life," James said. "My first call was to a computerized mes-

sage system called JS Computing Services, a simple one-line, ASCII, 300 maximum baud system run by a gentleman I never met named Jerry Slack. On his system, there was a highly energetic group of users who all talked about anything they wanted to. I was hooked, line and sinker, from the first connect message! Within a month I was 'part of the crowd' and enjoyed being able to post opinions and learn about life and current events, and computer stuff, on this simple system."

Of course, James' curiosity got the better of him. He soon developed an interest in HOW the BBS worked, what it looked like from the system operator's side. He also met another user on the system, Craig Lopez, who shared his interest in bulletin boards.

"We eventually met with the intent to become friends but also to start a BBS," James explained. "Craig and I dibbled and dabbled around with Commodore BASIC on his machine at his house, and with my machine at my house. Eventually we got a connection going. One day, we sat in his living room and, upon calling out to another system, Craig screwed up his password with his usual crummy typing and up came the words, 'ACCESS DENIED!', followed by a rude but completely understandable CLICK! I cried out to Craig, 'That's IT!' and — within one week — Access Denied BBS was born."

While this might seem like a long story to explain the start of a fairly simple, straightforward system, it was necessary to give you the depth of emotion and conviction, almost approaching reverence, held by James for the medium of telecommunications and for messaging within that medium in particular.

"Access Denied was born because I wanted to express myself," he explained. "And I like to see how things work, and

decided to be a leader and not a follower in some situations of my life. It also gave me an identity, introduced me to people, and also entertained me. Most importantly, I learned I have a desire to help people, and to make them interested in any and all aspects of this beloved hobby. It's just a way of being JAMES, if you know what I mean."

James brings a total online communications medium to his callers with Access Denied! I found literally dozens of excellent message conferences, both local and internationally echoed, covering every topic imaginable. And each was LOADED with active messaging —

**James brings a total online communications medium to his callers with Access Denied! I found literally dozens of excellent message conferences, covering every topic imaginable, each LOADED with active messaging.**

in spite of the fact that James suffered a major message base loss just weeks before I called.

But, messaging isn't the only thing you can do on this system. There is also a nice assortment of online games, including the ever-present TradeWars 2002, Global War, The Pit! and Trivia Door. And verified adults can enjoy using the online Match Maker or playing Fantasy Land.

James also welcomes visiting operators of other BBSes and offers them an additional file area with excellent shareware BBS software, doors and utilities.

But, even though Access Denied! is

**CONTINUES...**

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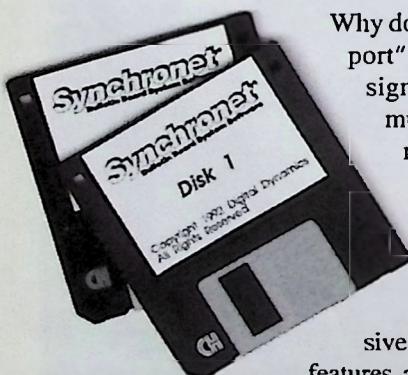


## Feature and Price Comparison for an 8 node BBS on a single 486 PC

	<b>Synchronet</b>	<b>Wildcat!IM</b>	<b>PCBoard/M</b>	<b>MajorBBS</b>	<b>TBBS</b>
Node license	\$199	\$799	\$440	\$508	\$895
Multitasker	\$200	\$200	\$200	Yes	Yes
8 port I/O	\$300	\$800	\$995	\$575	\$500
Multinode chat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multichannel chat	Yes	Extra	No	Yes	Yes
Private key by key chat	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Offline reader support	Yes	Yes	Extra	\$199	\$99
QWK networking	Yes	Yes	Extra	No	Yes
FidoNet import/export	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Send/receive NetMail	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
PostLink (RIME) support	Yes	Extra	Yes	Extra	No
RIPscript GUI support	Yes	No	No	Extra	No
Novell/DOS LAN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
976/900 billing support	Yes	No	No	Extra	Extra
Real-time node activity alerts	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Enhanced CD-ROM support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Extra	Extra
Multiuser SDK	Yes	No	Extra	Extra	Extra
Incoming FAX support	Yes	No	No	No	No
Chat between doors	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Bidirectional file transfers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multiple user command sets	Yes	No	No	No	No
Supports DOS doors	6 types	1 type	3 types	No	No
Hierarchical msg & file areas	Yes	No	No	No	No
External transfer protocols	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Total price</b>	<b>\$699</b>	<b>\$1799</b>	<b>\$1635</b>	<b>\$1282</b>	<b>\$1494</b>

Prices do not include CPU or modems. Features and prices compiled from vendor supplied information 2/93, are subject to change without notification. Wildcat!IM, PCBoard/M, MajorBBS, TBBS, QWK, FidoNet, PostLink, RIME, RIPscript, Novell, and DOS are trademarks or their respective companies. Commercial or Shareware Toss/Scan utilities are required for some message network technologies.

## YOU COULD TOSS THE OTHER TWO.



Why doesn't Synchronet have a special "multiport" version? Because Synchronet was designed from the ground up as a high-speed multinode BBS capable of running up to 10 nodes on a single 486. It's advanced interrupt driven output design combined with DESQview optimizations maximize CPU utilization, allowing Synchronet to out perform other systems running special "multiport" versions on expensive coprocessed I/O cards. For performance, features, and value, nobody beats Synchronet.

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now much larger than that early system James first put online with the help of his friend, in spite of the fact that literally hundreds of callers log on regularly from all over the country, the central focus is still quality messaging between modem users. And more messaging is what the future holds for the system as well.

"I want to form my own network, which is far more reaching than the technical oriented matters," James said. "I want my network to be the best in its class, known for fair treatment of users, but also for interest groups to be able to meet and discuss things in open-air round-table type discussions. I also hope to promote the beauty and art of creative message making, my first love of communications."

In other words, if you're new to BBSing, this is one system you most definitely should call. James loves communicating with his users and helping new BBS users get into his favorite hobby. "For many users, my system is their first modem call because I have a solid reputation for running a friendly system and get

99.9% of my callers from word of mouth," James said. "I also promote my philosophy and get users interested in the technical requirements (using .QWK readers, downloading help, etc.) by writing easy-to-understand help files. I also run a well-used 'New Users' message area where it is expected that experienced users will help the new people find their way around."

James is living proof of his own philosophy, that modeming is for EVERYONE. EVERYONE should at least give this system a call and see what a truly message-oriented BBS is all about. I'd almost thought such boards were gone before I ran into Access Denied! and I'm happy to see James doing such a fine job of keeping this sort of spirited, people-oriented system alive and well into the 90s.

Access to Access Denied! is free of charge, although you will be required to fill out a rather complete questionnaire and use a call-back verifier if you're local to the system or leave a message to SYSOP requesting deeper access if

you call long-distance.

But, all the excellent messaging and sysop help in the world can't quite dim

EVERYONE should at least give this system a call and see what a truly message-oriented BBS is all about. I'd almost thought such boards were gone before I ran into Access Denied!

the call to return home, which is so strong by the end of these monthly electronic journeys of ours.

Consequently, that's where we're ready to head next. It's time once again to pack our bags and hit the road for home, let our modems cool down a bit and get ready next month's cross-country journey through the land of BBSing. Until then, may all your connections be free of noise and your file transfers run at top modem speed!

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# Termulator 2.03

## Offers many ways to customize

If any of you have had to deal with the passing of a beloved one, you'll know how I feel. This month, I lost my 140 meg Hard drive. I know you're saying, "Hey, I thought you might have

meant someone or something important, like a grandparent or favorite uncle!" But if you've ever had about 80 meg of stuff not backed up disappear suddenly, it is a tragic loss. I mention this as a lesson for all Mac users... back up your data! You never know when there will be a death in the computer family...

This month, we will be reviewing the telecommunication package, Termulator 2.03. This is not the name of an Aaaarnold movie, but an excellent communication package that may be found online through America Online, or through most of your local Mac BBSes.



### Termulator 2.03

Termulator is a shareware program. This means that you are welcome to try it out free for 30 days. If you like it and continue to use it, you should register it by sending \$25 to the author: Brad Quick, P.O. Box 231, Staatsburg, NY 12580. Termulator has many great features. Some of these include:

**USER PROGRAMMABLE MACRO BUTTONS.** The 10 resizable buttons are visible on the top of the window. Just by pressing

the buttons you can do anything from typing text to opening a desk accessory and pasting to it. Macro commands allow the macro to do things like menu commands (like Hypercard doMenu), start and end screen capture, and start Xmodem transfers. A macro can be set to run on startup.

**SPLIT WINDOW.** This is a feature that I have come to really enjoy. It allows the user to view two portions of what has occurred in his terminal session. One can scroll back one window while the other window continues to display incoming data. This is useful when the text is going by too fast to read. And if one has a high speed modem, 9600 baud or better, you know what I'm talking about. The Split Window feature is also useful for getting the name of a file to download after the list has already gone by (scroll back to the list in one window, copy the file name, and paste to the other window).

**ZMODEM SUPPORT.** ZMODEM send, batch send, and receive all supported.

**CLOCK WITH \$ AMOUNT.** You can configure the clock with an amount per hour (pennies per hour), so you can keep track of your online expenses if you are using a pay per hour service. Good feature that helps eliminate the use of a separate utility to do this for you. Just a little tip: if you connect to a service that you have to pay for per minute or is long distance and you want to keep your time on the phone to a minimum, the best thing to do is to have messages you are interested in displayed or captured to a file on disk. Don't take your time to read them while

you are online. After you log out, you can scroll back in the buffer and read the messages at your own speed or open the captured file in your favorite word processor for reading.

**USER CONFIGURABLE KEYBOARD.** You can define key combinations for arrows, backspace, etc. Any key can be mapped to produce any character, control key, or to start a macro.

**BUFFERED KEYBOARD.** This is useful when speaking interactively with other users. See last month's column for a discussion about buffered keyboards.

Termulator also allows you to set how many "screens" of info will be buffered so that you can scroll back and read the info. It also has a "Copy and Paste to Modem" feature to easily send things from another word processor or scrapbook, brought in through the clipboard. I usually use McSink 7.0, a word processing desk accessory that allows me to open text files, select the info I want, and copy it to the clipboard. (McSink is an excellent WP DA that does much more than this. Try it and you'll be hooked too on all its capability.)

### Macros and Termulator

The macro buttons are located on the macro bar that divides the two windows. To edit a macro button, simply hold down the command key and click on the macro button you want to edit. A dialog box will come up that will allow you to name the macro button and select whether the macro will be run on startup or not. Only one macro can be

run on startup, but that macro can invoke other macros by using another command. Each macro also has an optional "trigger" associated with it. Any time Termulator encounters a string that is identical to the trigger for a particular macro, that macro will begin executing. This feature may be enabled by selecting a check box in the macro edit dialog window.

Text for a macro consists of plain text, control characters, and/or macro commands. Text will be sent to the modem as it is typed. All carriage returns in the text are ignored, so you'll have to use one of the special control characters discussed below.

Control characters are a ^ followed by a letter. For example, ^M would be used for a carriage return since control M is the equivalent of a carriage return.

Macros can perform special commands by entering \ followed by the name of the command. For example, the time and/or date can be entered automatically by using a \D or \T. These special commands can be entered in the plain text, or in a parameter string for another command. For

example, the command

```
\CaptureFile "MyFile \D \T"
```

would start a file capture with the name "MyFile 1/6/90 9.14.55 PM" or whatever the current date and time is.

Stopping a macro is as easy as choosing the menu selection Cancel Send. Clicking on another macro button will also stop any macro in progress.

Once macros have been written, you can move them around by command-clicking on them and dragging them into another macro location. The two macros are swapped so you don't lose the old macro.

Macro scripts are stored in memory while Termulator is running. If your setup has a lot of long macro scripts, you may need to increase the memory allocated to Termulator if you are running MultiFinder.

## Fonts

Termulator will allow you to choose any font that is installed in your system file

as the display font. Proportional fonts will not work very well when any special screen formatting is used (like vt100), so you may wish to use a monospaced font to begin with, like Monaco or Courier.

You can also choose the font size. Keep in mind that a normal VT100 ter-

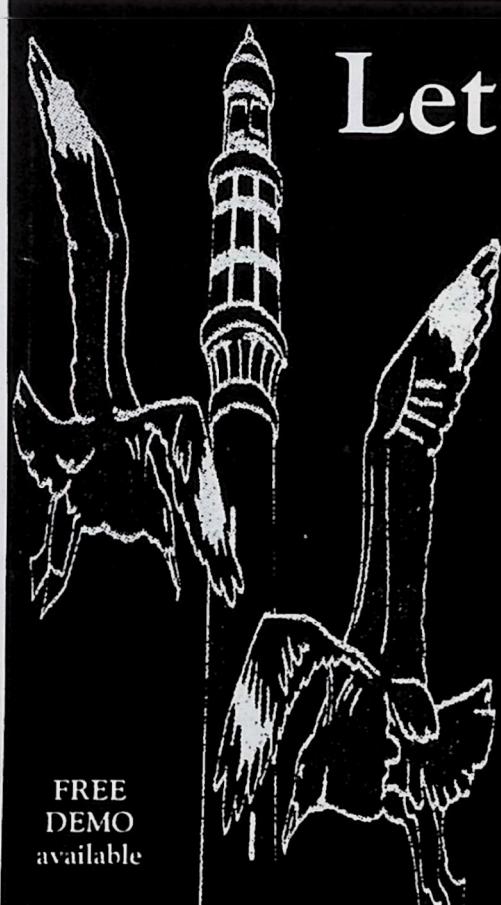
.....  
**Termulator will also allow you to compress fonts, making any font into a monospaced font.**

inal has an 80 x 24 screen, so if you choose too large a font, some of the characters may not be displayed in Termulator's window.

Termulator will also allow you to compress fonts, making any font into a monospaced font. Don't use kerned (overlapping) fonts. They don't work correctly with Termulator.

---

CONTINUES ...



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## XCMDS and XFCNS

Termulator will allow the use of HyperCard external commands and functions. To use these, they must first be installed into Termulator using a resource mover such as ResCopy or ResEdit just as is done with HyperCard. To access the external command or external function, just type a backslash followed by the name of the command or function, followed by any command or function parameters separated by commas. An external function

.....  
**Each macro also has an optional "trigger" associated with it. Any time Termulator encounters a string that is identical to the trigger for a particular macro, that macro will begin executing.**

is called the same way, but the result of the function is placed in an \\$ string. Any external that tries to access fields or cards in HyperCard will not work with Termulator. As you play around with different externals, best be prepared for a few system bombs.

## Final Notes

Termulator is an excellent package for telecommunications. It offers some of the most extensive macro support I have seen in a shareware product. The scroll back feature is a must for users of high speed modems. The only disadvantage I could find with the package is its ability to only handle up to 19200 baud. Many of you are probably saying so what, that's the highest you probably want to push over a phone line anyways. But what if you have two machines wired together? And you want to send stuff from machine to machine, and not use a modem? Many packages offer a 57600 baud rate for such a circumstance.

All and all, I would suggest of the packages we have reviewed the past few months, that Termulator and ZTerm are the top two packages, in my opinion, to work with. Check them out!!

Next month, since it is the Holiday season, we will look at games that you can play over the modem. There are many commercial packages out there, but surprisingly several good PD/ Shareware programs as well! Until then, good luck and keep connected!



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*Michael A. Kuykendall is a veteran Mac User and crony from the days of 64K ROMs and 400K floppies. He has been an overworked officer for 3 Mac User Groups, written for several computer publications around the country, and is currently President/Sysop/General flunkie for the Online Macintosh Users Group, based out of Atlanta, Georgia. The Online Macintosh Users' Group may be reached through their BBS, Macintosh Online, at 404-988-9904. Light some incense and say a few prayers for his soul. Comments and or suggestions may be sent to him in care of this publication.*

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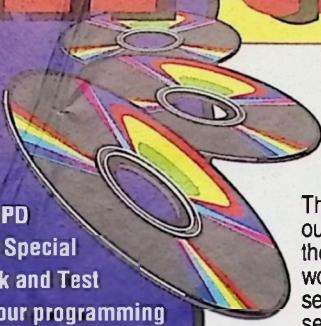
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*Reading your mail at your leisure*

# Offline Mail Readers

## Part II

Last month I covered QWK mail doors fairly extensively as a prelude to offline mail readers.

There are many nice OLRs available as shareware, so choosing between them can be difficult.

For right now, I would suggest something basic and simple until you get used to the process.



renamed OLX. SLMR is no longer supported, can't be registered, and is still hanging around (if you want support and a registered version, you'll need to download OLX-TD.EXE and read the documentation). Second, it's easy. SLMR is almost by definition the novice's choice for a first OLR.

It can be installed in a matter of seconds, configured within minutes, and is ready to go. In fact, if you have any experience with shareware installation procedures, it isn't even necessary to

read the documentation. Finally, it is commonly available and should be absolutely no problem to find. Look for SLMR21A.ZIP. Do not download SLMR21.ZIP; SLMR21A.ZIP is a bug fix release with a few improvements.

### Preparation

Make sure you have a copy of the file PKZ204G.EXE; this is a self-extracting archive file containing the shareware release of PKWare's almost indispens-

### Basic Features

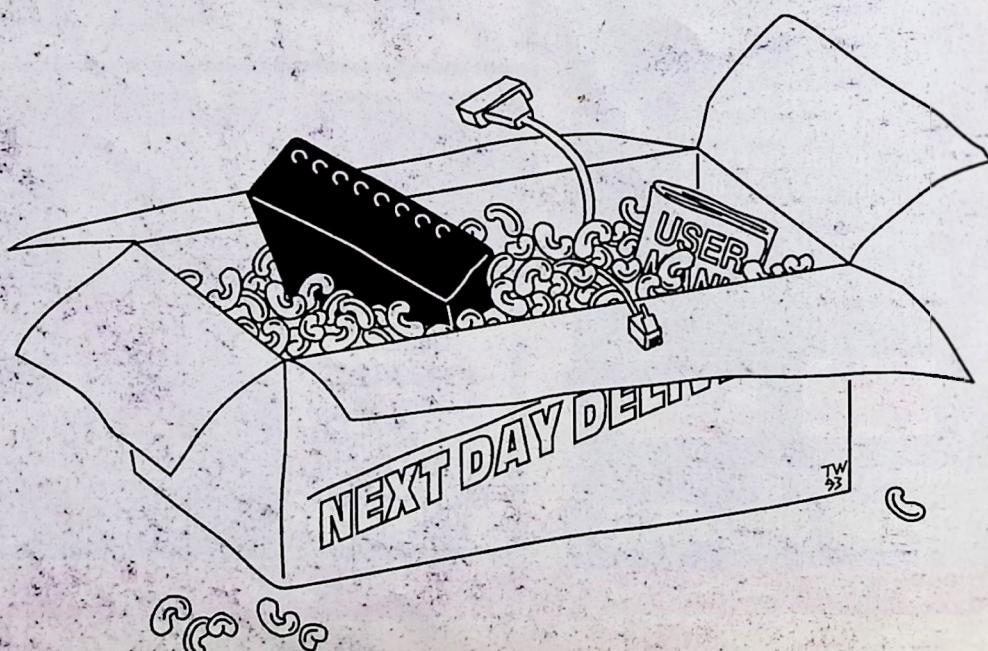
A simple OLR is going to use PKWare to Zip and UnZip .QWK and .REP files. Most include a small internal editor that will display messages and allow you to reply to them. Most include a basic tagline manager, but some don't.

For the most, it really is that simple.

### Silly Little Mail Reader, 2.1a

Most of the time, I'm not going to recommend specific software in this column.

In this case, I've decided to cover SLMR 2.1a for several reasons. First, it's free; the original author was bought out and what was SLMR has been



**CONGRATS  
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# All PCBoard SysOps are winners, but we'd like to spotlight a few.

## Boardwatch Magazine September 1993 Readers Choice Awards.



Dan Linton's Software Creations BBS in Clinton, Massachusetts. The system started in December 1989 with one telephone line on a DTK XT, a 2400 pbs modem, and a 209 MB hard drive. By the following October, the system was up to 4 lines, using U.S. Robotics HST Dual Standard modems, a 386 MB hard drive, and a LANtastic network to tie the computers together under

### **FIRST PLACE SOFTWARE CREATIONS**

The top BBS in the Boardwatch 100 Readers' Choice Contest was

PCBoard BBS software. With Linton's background in hardware design, the system largely served as a technical information center for other local BBS operators.

In March 1991, Linton released his first shareware program, titled Picture Puzzle. The popularity of the system increased as it became known as the home system of Picture Puzzle. As more and more BBS operators and callers from around the country called to get the latest version of this software, Creations blossomed. Today, Software Creations runs PCBoard version 15.0, Novell 3.11 local area network, and other top services. Dan has developed a following around the country. Congratulations Dan. For those interested, you can reach Software Creations' BBS at 508-368-7139.

*These are just a few of the many PCBOARD users in the top 100 readers choice poll.*

### THIRD PLACE • DELTACOMM BBS

This company is headed by Jeff Woods and currently markets the communications program Telix. They operate a 10 line BBS in Cary North Carolina using PCBoard v.15.0.

The system does provide online product support for Telix users, but they also want to expand the BBS into a full fledged online service. They offer a high quality, high volume service at little or no cost. Congratulations to Jeff and company. You can reach their BBS at (919) 481-9399.

### FOURTH PLACE • PC-OHIO

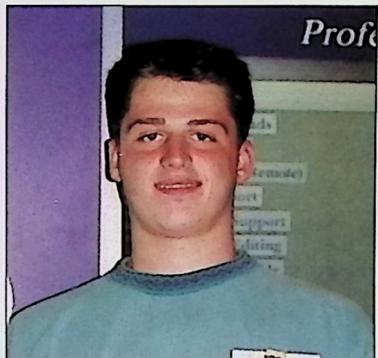
Norm Henke started PC-OHIO on 9/1/85 with one telephone line on a used TAVA XT clone in his bedroom. He began with RBBS but switched to PCBoard within a few months.

In 1986 he expanded to three nodes and then to five nodes. It has grown to (40) 486 computers in the basement all linked together thru an Ethernent newwork. He is now a "pro-fessional" Sysop spending as much as 12 hours a day. Congratulations, Norm. Contact his BBS at (216) 381-3320.

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of Palm Springs, CA. Unique features of DNIS include extraordinary customization of high speed information ex-change services such as *United Press International*, stock market quotes, reports from major brokerage firms, *Business News*, *TechWire* and many others. By 1994 DNIS plans to expand its PCBoard to over 12 lines with 13 gigabytes. Congratulations Michael.

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Aquila's BBS number is (708) 820-8344.



# New PCBoard v15.0. Presenting: “Features Unlimited.”

To get a BBS software package any better than this, you'd probably have to write it yourself.

This long-awaited version of PCBoard is the most configurable, fastest and most powerful PCBoard ever. Features added include RIPscript graphic support, Real-Time Node Chat, File Attachment to a Message and many other long-awaited enhancements and additions.

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For a detailed list of PCBoard's newest additions, call our support board, Salt Air BBS at (801) 261-8976 and type WHATSNEW at the Main Command prompt or call our office at the numbers listed below.

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When you are at the first screen after you've pressed the random function key to begin a reading session, press ALT and C at the same time. A list of configurable options will appear. Pressing enter on a highlighted option brings you to another screen where you can configure several different things.

able archive software. Create a directory in which to keep the unarchived files, and copy PKZ204G.EXE into it. Type PKZ204G and wait for the program to extract the necessary files.

Make sure this directory is listed in your AUTOEXEC.BAT's PATH statement. Reboot for it to take effect.

When you get a chance, read the documentation for this software. PKZIP.EXE and PKUNZIP.EXE need command line options to work, and you'll need to become familiar with a few of these options later. For right now, don't worry about it.

## SLMR21A.ZIP Installation

Create a directory named SLMR and copy the distribution file into the directory. Type "PKUNZIP \*." All the necessary files will be extracted. For safety, copy the distribution file to disk for safekeeping. To conserve hard disk space, delete the distribution file. After extraction, the original archive file isn't necessary except as a backup.

When you unZip the archive, you'll see six files: SLMR.EXE, SLME.EXE, SLMR.DOC, SL-PIF.DVP, TAGLINES.MR, and WELCOME.QWK.

Typing SLMR and pressing enter will load the program. After a second or so, you'll see a screen that will require you to press a specific function key to get started. In the unregistered version, SLMR randomly picks a function key that you will need to press before you can begin each session.

You will notice in the window that WELCOME.QWK has been detected and is highlighted. Pressing enter will cause SLMR to unZip it, load the editor, and display the first available message. I'd suggest you read the messages carefully; they contain the necessary instructions for basic operation. For additional instruction, read the SLMR.DOC file.

Pressing the escape key forces SLMR to go back one screen. If you continue to press it, SLMR will quit and return you to DOS.

CONTINUES ...

# A HACK IS A HACK AND HACKS ARE ILLEGAL

Silly Little Mail Reader (SLMR) was purchased from Greg Hewgill and Technique Computer Systems by Mustang Software, the producers of WildCat! BBS.

At the time of the buy, it was agreed that Greg Hewgill and TCS would no longer accept registrations for SLMR nor offer support for it. Mustang Software elected to abandon SLMR also. However, neither Greg Hewgill and TCS nor Mustang Software have released SLMR to the public domain. SLMR is freeware, but that's it.

A hacked version of SLMR has been making the rounds. This hack includes a hex-modified copy of SLMR. The modification "registers" SLMR and prevents it from displaying the initial registration screen. The modification also bypasses the random function key press.

This hacked version is an illegal modification of copyrighted software.

Copyright violation is a federal offense, and can be punishable by large fines, damage awards to the copyright owner(s), and even a jail sentence for the offender.

If you like SLMR and feel inclined to register it, download OLX-TD.EXE and order Offline Xpress (OLX) from Mustang Software. Don't break the law and risk a jail sentence just to save a few bucks.



## Macintosh Online

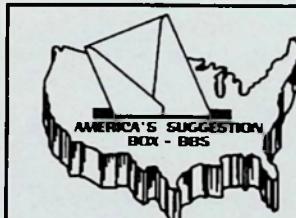
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**MAIL TO:**

Callers Digest Inc., 701 Stokes Rd., Medford, NJ 08055.

*You may FAX this form at (609) 953-7961.*

## SLMR Configuration

One of the nicer aspects of SLMR 2.1a is the ease with which it can be configured to suit the user. When you are at the first screen after you've pressed the random function key to begin a reading session, press ALT and C at the same time.

A list of configurable options will appear, and the first choice, Directories, will be highlighted.

You can use the up or down arrow keys to highlight the options. Pressing enter on a highlighted option brings you to another screen where you can configure several different things.

The first option, Directories, allows you to define where SLMR will find your .QWK packets and where to put your .REP files for upload. Just type in the DOS paths (make sure SLMR and your terminal program agree). You can also define where to put a temporary working directory; for right now, leave that option alone. The default working directory appears as a sub-directory under SLMR and is removed when you exit SLMR.

The next option, General, allows you to define memory usage, mouse usage, packet handling, and print strings. Pressing the space bar presents options where there are options; press F1 for field by field help.

The Toggles option lets you configure certain things about how you use SLMR, such as whether the address fields are presented in FROM/TO order or TO/FROM.

The Editor options is something you should leave alone for right now. Later, you may want to use an editor other than

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SLME; if so, this is where you'll specify the option.

The Replies option lets you choose quoting style and whether or not to include taglines (and if so, whether to use the tagline file sequentially or randomly).

SLMR can automatically detect which of four possible archive types (ZIP, ARC, LZH, or ARJ) are being used for .QWK and .REP files. The Packers option lets you specify the archive commands. Don't alter these until you have a problem.

If necessary, make sure you have the additional three archivers on hand somewhere in your PATH statement.

The colors option allows you to personalize SLMR's colors to suit you.

The Message header colors lets you personalize the message header field presentation.

The Function keys option lets you use SLMR to call other programs or define other functions. You'll need to read the SLMR.DOC file for more details.

## That Simple

Now you're ready to download and read your first .QWK packet. When you want to reply to a message, simply press "R." A routing screen will come up; fill it out or just make sure that the existing information is correct. When it suits you, press F10. The editor will come up with the original message quoted to whatever degree you indicated in the configuration section. And you can now type in your reply. When you're done, press F10 again. The routing screen will come up again in case you want to make any changes. Press F10 again when you're done.

You can go to the next message by pressing enter.

SLMR has a few more features. It's a pretty nice example of the better OLRs, in fact. You'll get used to over time.

## ...But Look Around

Don't just settle for SLMR. Look around and try out other OLRs. If you need to handle a large volume of personal mail or you need to keep track of conversations for professional rea-

sons, you may need additional features. Speed Read, for example, allows you to archive messages. RoboMail allows you to archive messages several different ways, and it will also allow you to "age" messages; messages are deleted after however many days you specify.

OLX lists certain commands that you have to memorize for SLMR. Give them a try. Use them. Put them through their paces, and find out which one suits you.

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# A Quest for the Perfect Menu Program

**D**o you remember when you thought 40 megs would be plenty of disk space for your needs? Then you found out that even 120 megs wasn't nearly enough! With the size of today's programs, your hard drive can fill very quickly. A typical game can use up 7 or 8 megs or more.



There are ways to increase the storage of your hard drive with such utilities as DOUBLE SPACE that comes with DOS 6.0 or STACKER. In a past issue of BBSCD, I even showed you a simple little batch file that saves space by compressing your program files into a ZIP file. These methods work very well, but you may not want to use them for some reason, or maybe you want MORE! Okay, how about a program that not only compresses your files but moves them to a floppy disk as well? Unless you are fortunate enough to be able to afford any size hard drive when the need arises, I urge you to take a look at MakeLoad ver 1.31 by Tony DePasquale of RamSoft Software.

## MakeLoad, ver 1.31

by Tony DePasquale

BBS File Name: MLOAD131.ZIP

MakeLoad gives you back disk space by physically removing your pro-

gram from your hard drive. Don't panic, your program is safely stored on a floppy disk! In fact, it will even create multiple volumes if it needs to. What you'll end up with is a set of numbered floppy disks and a hard drive just waiting for more programs to be added.

Installing MakeLoad is simply a matter of running the unique install program. Mr DePasquale goes out of his way to make the installation as painless as possible. This is definitely not a "load-and-go" program, but even the install program has a tutorial. I recommend you choose to take advantage of the tutorial when you install the software and then go through the main tutorial once you have everything installed. This makes the program a bit time consuming the first time, but it is well worth it.

Now, once everything is in its place and you know what to do, using the program is pretty straight forward. Although it probably won't be necessary, now would be a good time to do a complete backup of your system. If you're like me, you're long overdo anyway. You'll also need to format some disks and number them. You can use any size disk you happen to have and even mix them if you want. Now, just move to the directory you want to compress (or restore) and type MLOAD. From there it's just a matter of choosing a menu item.

There are several options that you can use and/or cus-

tomize, but I'll leave that for you to explore. You could even use it as a daily backup program.

I did a test to see just what MakeLoad can do. For a test I chose my LEMMINGS directory. Off of that directory is one that contains the second version of LEMMINGS and one with some help files, bringing the total up to about 1.2 megs. I was concerned at first that it might not read all of the sub-directories. But it did. It will recognize anything off of the parent directory. Keep in mind what is happening and you will understand that it takes some time to do its work. I took just about 2 mins to compress and move the program to a floppy disk and a bit over 1 min to restore.

As I said, the program is not designed for speed and the author is quick to point that out. I'm not sure I'd want to use it on my most used programs, but for the ones that get little use but are too important to delete, MakeLoad can save you a tremendous amount of space.

And again, I want to stress the importance of running the tutorials so you know what to do. Set aside a few mins and give this program more than a cursory look. It's definitely one that can

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**Unless you are fortunate enough to be able to afford any size hard drive when the need arises, I urge you to take a look at MakeLoad ver 1.31**

help quite a few people and with a registration of only \$25, it seems like a very good deal to me!

# The Tropical Fish Reference Guide, ver 1.0

by Don MacElrath  
.TTFRG10.ZIP

Are you having trouble keeping your tropical fish alive? Who doesn't? Keeping tropical fish is a popular hobby, but it takes more than just filling a tank with water and dropping in a few fish. There are other considerations such as feeding, water temperature, water condition, and even what types of fish to buy. Don MacElrath has taken some of the frustration out of keeping fish with his Tropical Fish Reference Guide.

All you need to know is presented in an easy to use menued program. Just load the .EXE file and you're on your way. Once loaded, you are given 2 choices — TOPICS and FISH LIBRARY. If you select TOPICS, you

are given a list of topics that you can read more about. These include such things as what size aquarium to buy, fish selection, feeding, water condition, and "aquascaping".

Selecting just the right mix of fish can also be troublesome. Some fish tend to fight with or even eat their tank companions. The **FISH LIBRARY** contains descriptions of about 75 different fish making it a lot easier choosing what to put in your aquarium.

Although it doesn't go into great detail, it does help you match different fish. If you are new to aquariums, or interested in starting out, the first thing you want to do is get **THE TROPICAL FISH RESOURCE GUIDE** by Don MacElrath. Registration is \$25.

## HARD DISK MENU PROGRAMS

One of the nicest advantages of shareware is the ability to try several programs before you find one that fits your needs.

I recently decided that I wanted a new menu program for the family com-

puter. The one I've been using is very good, but it was time for a change. However, since I have children and their friends that use that computer, I needed something that was not only easy to use, but one that was fairly easy to add menu items. Extra features such

**There are quite a lot of menu programs available. They range from simple batch files to very complex and complete systems.**

as a calendar, phone book, etc. were a plus but not necessary. So, I went on a quest for the "Perfect Menu Program".

Keep in mind that there are quite a lot of menu programs available. They range from simple batch files to very complex and complete systems. For many of us, batch files is the easiest way to go, but they only work if you are

## CONTINUES...

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the only one using that computer. Some of the menus on the other end of the scale are very good, but difficult to set up.

So, I started to check out some of the programs I had on hand. As I evaluated each one, I wrote down some quick notes. I divided them up between two different categories — Text based and Graphic Based. Following is what I found.

## TEXT BASED MENUS

### Easy Access, ver 6.3

(EA63.ZIP)

Easy to use and set up. Allows you to search your disk drives for programs if you are unsure. Deserves a look. Reg: \$25.

### Easy Menu

(EM730.ZIP)

Another easy one. Designed for ease of

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**Turbo Menu, ver 5.5 even has a kaleidoscope screen saver. One of the better text based menu programs.**

use by the novice user. You must know the dir/ filename of the program you want to load, however, it does check to see that it does exist. Up to 130 items can be added. Reg: \$10.

### Turbo Menu, ver 5.5

(TURBO55.ZIP)

Fairly easy to set up once you get the hang of it. Nice look and layout. Allows you to look at your dir tree to find the dir and file name of the program you want to add to the menu. It even has a kaleidoscope screen saver. Not flashy,

but nice. One of the better text based menu programs. Reg: \$39.95.

## PullDown Menus for DOS, v5.00

(PD5-1.ZIP - PD5-3.ZIP)

PullDown is different than any other menu in that it uses (quoted from the manual) an "Elegantly designed drop-down 'GUI like' industry standard interface that is fully mouse-aware... much like PC Tools Deluxe from Central Point or MS Word from Microsoft". So, although as a menu system it may be unique, you almost certainly have seen drop down menus like this in other programs. This one should work on just about any IBM compatible computer. Worth a look. Reg: \$49.95

## GRAPHIC BASED MENUS

There are some really nice graphical menus now available. If you want something real flashy and colorful, check out some of the following. Although a

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mouse is recommended, it is not required.

First, four separate menu programs from Jack Hildenbrand.

## FastMenu Plus, ver 6.0

(FASTM60A.ZIP & FASTM60B.ZIP)

## FastMenu Gold, ver 6.1

(GOLD61A.ZIP - GOLD61C.ZIP)

These are both pretty much the same except that FM Plus is for any display, whereas FM Gold is for VGA only. I can't think of anything that is missing from either of them.

Very user friendly and attractive interface. Features include, but are not limited to:

Screen blanking with changeable logo or .PCX file. Ability to set mouse and keyboard sensitivity. Fast AUTOEXEC.BAT & CONFIG.SYS file switcher. Very nice batch & text file editor with cut and paste. Complete directory & file manager. Text file viewer with text search. Timed application execution. Complete Address/ Phone Book/Dialer module and calculator. Reg: FM Plus \$30, FM Gold \$60

## Design Shell, ver 3.0

(DESIGN30B.ZIP)

## Toy Chest, ver 1.1

(TCHEST11.ZIP)

Like the 2 versions of FastMenu, these were written by Jack Hildenbrand. Design Shell is a nice looking ICON based menu. It has an excellent and complete file manager that includes .ZIP file management. You can use any of the 350 available ICONS, or you can convert WINDOWS ICONS. Easy to use and configure, and very classy looking.

Well worth the \$30 reg fee. The only problem I had was the fact that it didn't recognize my LAN.

Toy Chest is very similar to Design Shell with the exception of the file manager. The ICONS and FONTS are larger making it ideal for younger users. Once you show them how to add a program, they might even be able to

.....

**Design Shell is a nice looking ICON based menu. You can use any of the 350 available ICONS, or you can convert WINDOWS ICONS. Easy to use and configure, and very classy looking.**

do it on their own. This also has a conversion program so you can use either WINDOWS ICONS or Design Shell ICONS. Reg: \$26.

## Quick Menu, ver 107d

(QM107D.ZIP)

This one has it all, except ICONS. Included is an excellent file manager, calculator, calendar, and phone book. Extremely easy to use and set up. What makes this one different is the fact that your menu pages can be made to look any way you want. Menu buttons can be sized and colors and fonts can be changed making it easy to create a very personal menu system. Highly recommended. Reg: \$35.

## Magic Desk, ver 3.0

(MDESK301.ZIP)

This is actually an update to a program I reviewed in the past called Toy Box. Toy Box was nice, and Magic Desk is even better. As in the ear-

lier version, Magic Desk uses ICONS. You can use any of the 30 included, or convert some of the readily available Microsoft Windows icons. You can even design your own with the easy-to-use icon editor. Built-in screen blanker and usage log. It also allows you to use PCX files as background images. A real bargain. Reg: \$29.

Of course, there are several other packages that you can evaluate. These are just a few to get you started. Please keep in mind that when you do find the "Perfect Menu Program" for you, send the author the requested registration fee.

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# There are many ways of Getting Onto The Internet *services and fees vary widely*

I'm sure that most of us have moved one time or another in their lifetime. One of the problems with moving is keeping in touch with friends, relatives, business associates, and neighbors.



Earlier this year, I spent some time at several locations between the time I moved out from my old house and the time I moved in to my new apartment. That meant that all of my mail and phone calls had to be forwarded — which probably caused me to lose messages I should have received.

If mail was sent in a manner similar to Internet mail, this would not happen. First, electronic mail is fast! Over 95% of all electronic mail is delivered within one minute of sending. And if, for any reason, the message does not go through, the sender is informed immediately. With the Internet, your address would move with you! This is just a realization I came to upon my recent move.

## Public Dialup Internet Access

If you have been reading this column

for the past few months, you probably either have Internet access, or have a strong desire to get it. This month we'll take a look into the various options available.

Some offer only electronic mail, while others offer access to the full range of services. And prices vary, from as low as free (yes, free) for basic services to hundreds of dollars each month.

## Bulletin Board Systems (BBS)

Bulletin board systems around the country are becoming low-cost providers of Internet access. Each system subscribes to a full-service provider and gets their own node name (bbscd.com, for example). The BBS usually passes along the costs to their membership. Prices can range from 45 to 100 dollars for a one year subscription to the BBS. Of course, you get a lot more than just electronic mail for your money.

One of the problems with BBS Internet access is that most systems only provide electronic mail services. A few boards, who have enough resources, also receive USENET feeds.

If you are lucky, you can

find a few systems which actually have limited telnet and FTP abilities — however, these BBS'es are few and far between. By calling several systems in the area, you should be up and running with a e-mail address within days!

## Public Data Networks

It seems that large online services are a very lucrative environment for today's telecommunications world. Companies such as CompuServe, Delphi, and America Online are becoming a major force in the business of information distribution. For a monthly fee, plus hourly connect charges, members gain access to a wide range of services. For example, most of the above services support hundreds to thousands of special interest areas. All feature online games, many of which can be played interactively against other online members. Other services include daily

**One of the problems with BBS Internet access is that most systems only provide electronic mail services. A few boards, who have enough resources, also receive USENET feeds.**

stock information, weather reports, national news reports, travel arrangements, and so on.

These services can be expensive. One of the above services charges a membership fee of \$9.95 per month. The first five hours of each month are free. Once those five hours are used, however, the real charges start adding up.

Daytime access can add several dollars per hour to your bill. Calling during the off-hours is far easier on the pocketbook, but may not be convenient for many. Also, connect charges vary depending on what speed your modem is. Higher dialup speeds cost more, and sometimes 9600 baud connections are practical only if you are downloading files.

Finally, that closest access number may be a toll call from your location. That doesn't necessarily mean these services are not worthwhile, just that they've been a bit too expensive for my taste.

## Full Service Providers

Just a few years ago, the cost of installing and maintaining a direct Internet connection made it possible for very few organizations. Recently, however, these prices have fallen so that more businesses are getting connected.

Full service providers are companies whose sole purpose of business is to provide their Internet connection to others (for a fee, of course). These companies pay the thousands of dollars required for the connection installation, maintenance, etc, and then sell access to you. Most offer regular phone line access: the end user has an account which is charged for the time used each month. A few have an 800 number access line, but those that do are very few and relatively expensive.

To understand how much this might cost, let's take a look at a sample service. This company has a local access phone number to where I live. The cost to me is \$99 in initial startup fees plus

Full service providers are companies whose sole purpose of business is to provide their Internet connection to others (for a fee, of course). A few have an 800 number access line, but those that do are very few and relatively expensive.

an additional \$99 each month. This provides me with full Internet access — ftp, telnet, electronic mail, etc. Since the number is a toll call from my house, I would also have to pay phone company charges for my connect time, which could easily double the monthly fee.

If I call their 800 number, however, the fee system is different. Startup fees drop to only \$36. Monthly charges are \$19, plus \$10 per hour of connect time. Doing a little math shows that if I use the account more than eight hours per month, then the local access number is the better buy.

The task left up to you is to find these local numbers. The easiest way by far is to simply locate the current Public Dialup Internet Access List (PDIAL) from a local BBS and download it. If you can't find it, ask a sysop of one of the bigger systems in the area, chances are that they will have some information or know where to get it. If all else fails, you can contact me either here at BBS Callers Digest, or via my e-mail address (although, if you could contact me that way, you probably already have Internet).

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A light emitting diode, also mounted on the front of the unit, glows whenever the device is eliminating noise from the phone lines. This device can solve the majority of noise problems associated with telecommunications today, and is sold with a 30 day, money back guarantee. They sell for \$25 each plus \$4 shipping and handling. To order, call Rusty n Edie's at 216-726-4217, fax to 216-726-3595 or call their BBS number 216-726-2620; they will accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

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# Latch onto a good deal from **MultiTech Systems**

**Y**ou may have heard that various modem manufacturers offer discounts on high-speed modems to qualified sysops. Its true: you can save 40% to 70% off list prices on brand-new, state of the art equipment. However, you will soon find yourself chasing down every BBS in the country trying to get all the details. When you get the details, you will still have to sort through and find out who really has the best deal. I've been researching Sysop Discounts since 1991 and until recently published regular electronic report (SYSMOD.ZIP). The readers of Caller's Digest get this report as a monthly feature.



and present an overview of their own sysop program.

## MultiTech Sysops Discount Requirements

In many ways, MultiTech has an informal Sysops Discount program. For example, there is no minimum time limit which your BBS must meet before applying. Also, there is no minimum time limit that you must keep the modem before taking it offline. Most other manufacturers have a six month requirement for before and after the sale. There are no forms to fill out or detailed questionnaires. They simply ask that you prepare a business letter mentioning your voice phone, BBS phone number, shipping address and a certified or cashier's check. The informal nature of the program means that credit cards are not accepted. However, MultiTech does pick up the tab for ground shipment of your order which saves you another \$5 to \$10.

## **MultiTech Bulletin Board System**

The MultiTech BBS runs Wildcat! software and is always easy to get through to. Their file selection consists entirely of technical notes, sales information, white papers, FAQs, and the Multi-Talk quarterly newsletter. MultiTech recently added a toll-free 800 number to reach their BBS. This makes them only the second modem manufacturer to offer 800

BBS service (Hayes Corp. is the other). This shows a clear commitment to customer support.

Unfortunately, their BBS does not have a text file describing their sysop program. There is a file called PRICE.TXT which contains the latest list prices. You simply cut the prices by 50% to determine what the Sysops Discount rate would be for each item. Please note in my tables presented along with this article that I have already done the arithmetic.

## Multiple Modems from MultiTech

MultiTech does have an extensive array of high speed modems. Many of these are simply too sophisticated to be lumped in with generic v.32bis modems. With this in mind, I'll try to highlight those members of the product line most interesting to sysops.

Multitech external modems are identical to their rackmount models. Thus, an external can become a rackmount by removing its case. Alternately, you can buy a case for a rackmount to convert for external use.

Most sysops will be interested in the MT1432BA, MT1432MU, or the MT1432BL models. Each of these works at all speeds from 300 bps to 14,400 bps with auto-fallforward and

**[MultiTech Systems'] Sysop Discount**  
program has always been a bit harder to get  
into, but well worth the effort for a flat  
discount of 50% off their entire product line.

fallback capability. Each model includes v.42/v.42bis/MNP5 data compression and CCITT Group 3/EIA TR.29 Class 2 fax capability. All of MT1432xx series modems also have remote configuration and UUCP protocol "spoofing". The UUCP spoofing speeds up dialup Unix applications by letting the modem handle acknowledgements so that this small-block protocol (smaller than Xmodem, by default) can work efficiently.

The MT1432MU is a pocket modem which runs on 9V battery or AC adapter. The MT1432BA is a full size external that includes all of the features mentioned earlier plus a callback security feature. The MT1432BL is similar to the MT1432BA but has more features that are necessary for use in a leased-line (i.e. dedicated connection up 100% of the time) environment. Specifically, it adds compatibility with 4-wire leased lines and dial backup features. Dial backup means that the modem will automatically detect line failure (loss of carrier) and redial the other modem. This is required in environments where you are using a dedicated connection over a standard phone line.

Users of the IBM PS/2 Micro-Channel Architecture Bus (MCA) should take note that Multitech also offers an internal MCA Bus modem. This makes Multitech the only other vendor besides Ven-Tel to offer such hardware to sysops at a discount. The MT1432ES is available for \$400 and offers all the features of the MT1432BA except UUCP spoofing.

## MT1432PCS MultiExpress Personal Communications System

The MT1432PCS is a hardware/software product that integrates all the communication needs of the desktop. It combines a full duplex, hands-free speaker phone with sophisticated fax, data, and voice messaging capabilities. Its powerful "Show & Tell" feature transmits voice and data simultaneously over a single analog phone line. The MultiExpressPCS software runs under Microsoft Windows, using all the familiar Windows elements like icons, scroll bars, and Help menus. Used in con-

.....  
**The MT1432PCS is a hardware/software product that integrates all the communication needs of the desktop. Its powerful "Show & Tell" feature transmits voice and data simultaneously over a single analog phone line.**

junction with the PCS hardware, it integrates the following functions: Telephone, Voice Mail, Fax Manager, MultiMedia Mail, Show & Tell, and Address Book. This product finally fulfills Bill Gates' visionary "Information at Your Fingertips" speech given at Comdex. The Personal Communications System supports the V.32bis/V.42bis standards for data communications for effective throughputs of 57.6K bps. It is also fully compatible with the CCITT's Group 3 standards for fax communication and complies with the de facto Class 2 standards for fax modem control. The entire firmware for the Multi-

ModemPCS is stored in flash PROMs which you can download into the modem.

The Multi-ModemPCS/MultiExpressPCS uses a packet protocol to control advanced capabilities that integrate telephone functions, data, fax and voice messaging. The packets can contain commands, responses, data streams or voice streams. A header in each packet uniquely identifies its contents and its destination. Specifica-

tions of this protocol, called the Multi-Tech Supervisory Protocol (MSP), are available to independent software developers upon request

## Multitech Contact Information

Here's the complete contact information for MultiTech: Multi-Tech Systems Inc., 2205 Woodale Drive, Mounds View, MN 55112. Voice: (800)328-9717 or (612)785-3500. Fax: (612)785-9874. BBS: (800)392-2432 or (612)785-9875. Telex: 4998372 MLTTC (International).

## REGULAR FEATURES

### Price and Performance

I've boiled down all the price and performance data from the manufacturers into a simple chart (see Table Ia). The minimum performance level is v.32 (9600 baud), since this is the worldwide high-speed standard. All modems also must have v.42bis for error correc-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

## Freedom!

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TABLE Ia — SYSOPS HIGH-SPEED MODEM DISCOUNTS BY VENDOR &amp; MODEL TYPE

VENDOR/ PRODUCT	9600 V.32 INTERNAL	9600 V.32 EXTERNAL	14400 V.32BIS INTERNAL	14400 V.32BIS EXTERNAL
Aceex	N/A	N/A	1496VP* \$290	1496V+* \$320
AT&T Paradyne	N/A	N/A	3721-B1-001* \$202	3710-A1-201* \$222
				3710-A1-211 \$206
ATI Technologies	N/A	9600 ETC/E \$275	N/A	N/A
Digicom Systems	Scout \$241	Scout \$248	Scout Plus \$266	Scout Plus \$276
			9624PC+ \$340	9624LE+ \$350
Forval	N/A	N/A	14400 (Int.) \$375	14400 (Ext.) \$405
Hayes Corp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ultra 144 \$249
				Optima 144+FAX* \$179
Intel	N/A	N/A	SatisFax/400 \$249	14.4 EX \$269
				SatisFAX/400e* \$245
MultiTech	MT932BC* \$375	MT932BA* \$375	MT1432BC \$400	MT1432BA* \$400
			MT1432ES \$400 MCA	MT1432MU* \$300
				MT1432BL* \$450
				MT1432PCS \$575
Practical Peripherals	N/A	N/A	N/A	PM14400FXSA* \$249
				PM14400FXMT* \$155
Supra Corp.	N/A	SupraFAXModem* \$199	SupraFAXModem* \$199	SupraFAXModem* \$249
USRobotics	N/A	N/A	N/A	HST Dual Stand. \$449
				Courier v.32bis \$299
Ven-Tel, Inc.	PCM96FAX* \$175	EC96FAX* \$195	PCM144FAX* \$195	EC144FAX* \$215
	MCM96FAX* \$325 MCA		PCM V.32bis* \$480	ECV.32bis* \$525
			MCM144FAX* \$380 MCA	RMV.32bis II* \$425
Zoom Telephonics	N/A	N/A	VFPV.32Bis* \$145	VFXV.32Bis* \$149
Zyxel	N/A	N/A	U-1496B* 16.8K \$299	U-1496E* 16.8K \$299
			U-1496B+* 19.2K \$389	

\* Modems with an asterisk include 14,400 baud FAX send/receive at no extra charge!

Notes on Table I: 1. All internal modems are assumed to be PC-AT ISA bus unless otherwise noted.

2. Consult manufacturer for details on availability of Caller ID or voice-mail processing options (any modem above).
3. These prices NEVER include shipping and handling, which is always extra.

**TABLE Ib — SYSOPS MODEM ACCESSORY DISCOUNTS BY VENDOR**

VENDOR	PART #	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	SYSOP PRICE
Hayes Corp.	08-00593	ISDN PC Adapter	\$450
	08-00509	ISDN System Adapter	\$450
	08-00456	ESP (Enhanced Serial Port) AT Bus	\$ 99
MultiTech	CC216A	Rackmount for 16 modems. no PS	\$175
	PS216A	Power Supply for RackMount	\$85
USRobotics	N/A	High-speed Dual-Async Serial Card	\$ 50
Ven-Tel	DS1200-3PR	Rackmount for 16 modems. w/PS	\$425
ZyXEL	N/A	High Speed I/O (1P/2S/1G) 1 16550	\$30
	N/A	High Speed I/O (1P/2S/1G) 2 16550	\$45

**TABLE II — SYSOP BUYERS RESTRICTIONS — IMPORTANT!**

VENDOR CONTRACT	BBS MUST HAVE BEEN UP AND WORKING FOR...	AFTER BUYING IT, YOU MUST USE IT FOR...	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MODEMS YOU MAY BUY...	CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED FOR PURCHASE
Aceex	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
AT&T Paradyne	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA, Mastercard American Ex.
ATI Technologies	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
Digicom Systems	currently	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	none
Forval	N/A	N/A	No Maximum	none
Hayes Corp.	6 months (may be waived)	unspecified time	1 per phone. Max. 4, may be negotiated	VISA MasterCard
Intel	currently	12 months	1 per phone. Max. 4.	VISA, MasterCard American Ex. *
Multi-Tech	currently or plan to	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	none, must have Cashier's Check
Practical Peripherals	currently	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
Supra Corp.	currently	unspecified time	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
USRobotics	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA Mastercard
Ven-Tel	6 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA MasterCard
Zoom Telephonics	6 months	9 months	Double the # of current phone lines on the bbs	Visa MasterCard Amex
Zyxel	3 months	6 months	1 per phone. No Maximum	VISA MasterCard

\* Indicates no personal checks accepted.

### UNCLE HANK'S SHAREWARE REVIEW NEWSLETTER

Published bi-monthly, this newsletter takes a good look at some of the best Shareware available today. Each issue contains reviews from a wide variety of areas. Always in plain English.

For a sample issue, send \$2 to: Uncle Hank's Shareware, 8 Hendrick St., Easthampton, MA 01027

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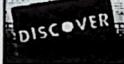
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357 CONFERENCES









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tion and data compression to make this list.

In practice, I recommend only v.32bis (14400 bps) modems for sysops. The v.32bis offers 50% more throughput for between 10 to 25% extra cost. I expect that many manufacturers will quietly discard v.32 modems from production as soon as V.FAST (22000 to 28000 bps) modems go into production. As shipping dates for V.FAST modems come closer to shipping, I'll be providing upgrade information on them.

## More Than a Modem

Some vendors offer more than just modems to the sysops that join their program. For example, Hayes Corp. offers 50% to 70% off discounts on the high speed serial ports and ISDN adapters. Other vendors offer big discounts on modem rackmounts. A rackmount reduces the tangle of multiplying power supplies and becomes economical for sysops planning on eight or more of the same brand modem. See Table Ia

for a complete listing of modem accessories available.

## Buyers Restrictions

If you're the sysop of a BBS that has been operating 24-hours per day for the last six months, then you're automatically eligible for any of these discounts. Table II shows the minimum operating requirements as given by each manufacturer. Some manufacturers only require that you are currently running a BBS at time of ordering. A few, such as Hayes, may actually waive the current operating requirement.

Once you receive your modem, you're expected to keep the BBS up and running between six and twelve months (requirements vary). Generally, the modem is yours to do whatever you want with after this period expires. Some manufacturers may ask you to never sell modems purchased on a discount plan. Modem resellers, such as computer stores, are generally excluded from participation in discount plans.

Most manufacturers allow you to purchase up to one modem per incoming BBS phone line. However, if you plan to purchase more than four modems at the discount price, then you should talk to someone before placing your order. Multiple modem orders may require you to submit copies of phone bills as proof. At that point, there may be traditional quantity

discounts available.

Nearly all of the modem vendors are accepting VISA and Mastercard for orders. However, Accex, ATI, Digicom, Forval, and MultiTech still do not accept credit cards for orders. In those cases, you must submit a cashier's check or money-order. Personal checks often require additional clearing time which just holds up your order.

One requirement, which goes for all vendors, is that they generally expect at least a one-line advertisement somewhere in your welcoming screens. For example: "Using the finest Model YYZ modem from Acme Modem Co.", would be perfectly acceptable in all cases.

Most vendors will expect you to create a special account on your BBS for them to verify at least one of your phone numbers. They don't like to have to sign on without a pre-existing account.

## Order Processing and Availability

Delivery times and schedules vary radically, so your mileage may vary. My own experience with Hayes Corporation is that they will generally ship Sysop orders within 48 hours. I have also ordered from Practical Peripherals and they have a mandatory three week waiting period before they ship. On the far extreme, US Robotics guarantees a two to six week waiting period. Table III summarizes the published processing schedules of each manufacturer. Remember, the manufacturers are doing you a favor by offering discounts below retail. Please observe courtesy.

For Canadian, European, and other sysops outside the U.S., you may or may not be eligible for a discount offer. Please check carefully ahead of time to avoid disappointment. You may want to check with their European subsidiaries before contacting the U.S. office.

## UPDATE INFORMATION

If you have information about manufacturer discounts then please contact me through: Internet—sysop@hal9k.com or U.S. Mail: Victor R. Volkman, c/o Callers Digest Inc., PO Box 416, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054.

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3/12/24 8N/1

**TABLE III — SYSOP ORDER PROCESSING, AVAILABILITY, FIRMWARE UPGRADE POLICY**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>ORDERS CAN BE PLACED PLACED FOR SHIPMENT TO THESE COUNTRIES...</b>	<b>TYPICAL TIME BETWEEN ORDER AND SHIPPING</b>	<b>FIRMWARE (ROM) UPGRADE POLICIES</b>
Aceex	U.S., Canada (Canadians must pay 8% GST, +7% Ontario res.)	Unspecified	Unspecified
AT&T Paradyne	U.S., Canada	3-4 weeks	Unspecified
ATI Technologies	U.S., Canada (Canadians must pay 8% GST, +7% Ontario res.) CAN\$ prices assume exchange rates of CAN 1\$ = US \$0.83	4-6 weeks	Unspecified
Digicom Systems	U.S., Canada, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia (185 to 245 VAC)	2-3 weeks	Unspecified
Forval	U.S., Canada, Europe (call for details)	1 week * (or less)	Anyone can download from their BBS and load the EEPROMS w/AT command
Hayes Corp.	U.S., Canada (Canadians must pay 13.9% customs tax)	1 week * (or less)	Will replace entire modem if warranted, otherwise no upgrade
Intel	U.S. only	2-4 weeks	Unspecified
Multi-Tech	U.S. only	1 week* (or less)	Unspecified
Practical Peripherals	U.S. only	3-4 weeks *	Call their voice line and they will send FREE
Supra Corp.	U.S. only	3-4 weeks	Call their tech support BBS and order them FREE
USRobotics	U.S., Canada, Europe (110/220 VAC only) see EURODEAL file	2-6 weeks	Unspecified
Ven-Tel	U.S., Canada	1-2 weeks	Unspecified
Zoom Telephonics	Worldwide Call for details.	2-3 Weeks	Unspecified
Zyxel	U.S., Canada	1 week (or less)	Unspecified

\* indicates the shipping time has been personally verified by my own purchasing experience.

Order processing: "Unspecified" means there's nothing in writing, you could be looking at from 1 to 8 weeks.

Firmware upgrade: "Unspecified" means that the policy is simply not publicized. If the modem was properly engineered and tested, no upgrades should be necessary.

**TABLE IV — VENDOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>VENDOR NAME</b>	<b>CALL THEIR BBS AT THIS NUMBER AND...</b>	<b>...DOWNLOAD THIS FILE</b>	<b>IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS CALL...</b>
Aceex	(416)538-9999	ACEEX.ZIP	(416)538-0101
AT&T Paradyne	(813)532-5254	ATTSYSOP.TXT	(800)554-4996
ATI Tech.	(416)756-4591	SYSOPLAN.ZIP	(416)756-0718
Digicom	(508)262-1412	SCOUT.TXT	(508)262-1277
Forval	(408)294-3065	FORVAL.ZIP	(408)294-0526
Hayes Corp.	(404)446-6336; (800) USHAYES	H96SYSOP.TXT	(404)840-9200
Intel	(503)645-6275	OFFER.TXT	(503)228-9707
Multi-Tech	(612)785-9875; (800) 392-2432	PRICE.TXT	(612)785-3500
Pract. Per.	(805)496-4445	SYSBBS.TXT	(805)497-4774
Supra Corp.	(503)967-2444	SUPRA.TXT	(503)967-2400
USRobotics	(708)982-5092	SYSDEAL.TXT	(708)982-5010
Ven-Tel	(408)922-0988	SYSDEAL.TXT	(408)436-7400
Zoom Telephonics	N/A	N/A	(800)631-3116
Zyxel	(714)693-0762	ZYXEL.TXT	(714)693-0804

## Powerful peripherals for your Commodore

# New Hard Drives and RAM Boosters

Contrary to popular belief, technology has NOT left Commodore users behind. Some of the latest technology have been put into Commodore peripherals that give us new



dimensions in computing. This month, we'll take a look at Commodore and Creative Micro Design's products. While not an in depth look at each product, this should give you an idea of what's available for the 64 and 128.

### First a quick look at Commodore disk drives.

The 1541 disk drive is the most common drive available for the C64/128, and holds 664 blocks of data on each disk side. The 1571 operates exactly as the 1541 in C64 mode, and in 128 mode, it formats both disk sides at the same time, granting 1328 blocks free. The 1581 drive uses 3.5 inch disks, and gives 3,160 disk blocks free. Along with higher capacity, the '71 and '81 use Burst routines, which increases their speed in 128 mode, and use MFM formatted disks in CP/M mode. 1581 disks can be partitioned into smaller disk areas. These drives are available through mail order houses, either new and factory refurbished.

The 1541 disk drive is notorious for its lack of speed. One DOS and speed enhancement system is JiffyDOS, mar-

keted by Creative Micro Designs, Inc. It replaces the kernel ROM chip in the computer, and Commodore or third party disk drives. JiffyDOS has many extras included such as "macros" for typing common disk commands. The disk directory is loaded by pressing the F1 key, then programs can be loaded, run, saved, or erased by simply adding one special character before its name in the directory.

Commodore developed 3 different RAM expansion units (REUs) which are plugged into the cartridge port of the computer: the 1700, 1764, and 1750, which hold 128, 256, and 512K of Random Access Memory, respectively. Program files which require heavy disk access run faster when run from the REU. Many term programs allow the REU to be used as a virtual disk drive, saving time and/or money when calling Bulletin Boards. BUT! Once the computer is turned off, programs or files in the REU disappear to that place where lost files, mismatched socks and ball point pens go, never to be seen again, as the REUs depend on power from the computer to store data. Clones of the 1750 are available from mail order sources.

### High Speed and Capacity Devices from CMD

Creative Micro Designs, Inc. (CMD) markets both hardware and software for the Commodore 64/128. They are one of the few companies left developing new products for our computers. Their catalog is available by calling 1-800-

638-3263 and requesting it.

The HD Series hard drives are more expensive than many IBM drives, but several differences between them, make it unfair to compare them on the basis of price. Commodore hard drives must accomplish compatibility with pre-existing disk drives to be fully functional. Unlike PC hard drives, Commodore drives must be in a case and have its controllers built in, ready to be plugged into the serial port on the C64/128. Standard SCSI hard drives for the IBM, MAC, or Amiga can be daisy chained to the HD drives, and I've heard of Commodore BBS's that now have GIGABYTES of hard drive space available. Plus, if you (ahem) move to another computer format, you can take your hard drive with you.

To allow for compatibility with Commodore disk drives, the hard drive is partitioned. Partitions can emulate each of the 3 common Commodore disk drives, including the unique features of Burst for the '71 and '81 partitions, and the ability to use '81 style disk partitions. CMD developed a "Native" mode partition to use the added hard drive space available. Native mode partitions can be up to 16 megabytes (mb) in size (about 65,000 disk blocks), with unlimited multiple subdirectories within each.

Commands to move between partitions and subdirectories are similar to MS-DOS commands. The front of the hard drive has RESET and SWAP buttons to swap device numbers 8 and 9 with other disk drives, for programs that insist on operating from device 8. The hard drives come with a Real Time Clock (RTC) built in for time/date

stamping of files. The drives are available with 20 to 245 megabytes, and priced accordingly.

Using the hard drive is like using any Commodore disk drive, with a few added conveniences. For instance, if you are in one partition, you can access programs and files that are on another partition with ease. According to CMD, most of the hard drives they sell are sold to Bulletin Board operators who need the added speed and storage of hard drives to run their boards. Many commercial and shareware BBS programs include support for hard drive owners, making it easy for to store specific BBS files such as user information, message bases, and on-line games in different subdirectories.

CMD's RAMLink is difficult to describe, mainly because it encompasses so many different features and functions. RAMLink fits into the cartridge port of the computer. It has two cartridge slots on its top; one a pass-thru port for utility cartridges, the other a RAM-port for REUs. It has a separate power supply, optional battery back up, and a parallel cable connection for CMD's hard drives. It has the same RESET and SWAP buttons as the hard drive. This is the "stock" RAMLink.

Used in this way, any RAM expansion device plugged into it will keep it's contents even when the computer itself is turned off, and with the optional battery backup, even occasional power failures won't cause data loss. Hard drive owners with a RAMLink and the optional parallel cable gain added speed from parallel connection to the hard drive. Adding a RAMCard and populating it with common 1mb or 4mb SIMM memory chips, RAMLink becomes a virtual hard drive, and like the hard drive, can emulate any of the Commodore disk drives including Native mode partitions.

Up to four 4mb SIMM chips can be installed, giving our Commodores a whopping 16 megabyte of RAM that doesn't disappear when the computer is turned off. A utilities disk is included with it, and an optional RTC (real time clock) kit is also available.

Another device, similar to RAMLink, is RAMDrive. RAMDrive is manufactured by Performance Peripherals, Inc., and until recently

was marketed by CMD. It is now available directly from Performance Peripherals. Its obvious the two companies worked together during the design stage; the overall operation of RAMDrive is very close to the operation of the RAMLink. It's small, uses a separate power supply and comes with batteries built into it, making it more portable than the RAMLink. It too has SWAP and RESET buttons. RAMDrive, however, comes with a set amount of memory built into it, available in 512K, 1 and 2 megabyte configurations. RDX, a slightly different model, is expandable from 1 to 8 megabytes.

The new FD-series drives from CMD are available in two forms, the FD-2000 and the FD-4000. Both can read and write to standard 1581 disks. The FD-2000 can also use high density 3.5 inch disks, formatted to 1.6 mb of disk storage, while the FD 4000 also has this ability, it also uses 3.2 mb "Extended Density" (ED) disks. The drives are faster than the 1581, and have many of the same features of the hard drive and RAMLink including the SWAP feature, drive emulations, and optional RTC. The extended density disks are similar to having a small hard drive with interchangeable disks. BCopy, a utility that comes with the drives, will backup CMD's hard drives and RAM devices to any disk drive, which for power users, is both a convenience and a necessity.

## A Few Important Differences

While the CMD HD Series hard drives are capable of utilizing burst commands, and the FD disk drives use burst in their 1581 drive emulation, RAMLink and RAMDrive were not designed for burst commands, mainly because burst relies on hardware in the disk drive which isn't available with the RAM devices.

This causes some incompatibility for 128 owners with programs using burst routines. Commercial software sometimes include protection schemes that cause certain events within the 1541 drive, so some programs will not run from RAMLink or RAMdrive, although most run just fine. CP/M mode will only recognize the 1541 emulation, which

can be a problem for CP/M users expecting to use the 1581 emulation partitions. GEOS operates in RAMLink or RAMDrive, and when configured for it, will recognize a special DACC (Direct Access) partition as if it were a RAM Expansion device. Programs that support the 17XX series of REUs do not recognize the memory in RAMLink

.....

**...any RAM expansion device plugged into [CMD's RAMLink] will keep it's contents even when the computer itself is turned off**

as an REU unless an REU is actually plugged into the RAM port.

The hard drive and FD drives come with the disk drive portion of JiffyDOS installed, but the computer must have JiffyDOS installed to gain any benefits. JiffyDOS is built into the RAMLink and RAMDrive, and acts as if you had installed the ROM chip within your computer.

Anyone spending time downloading files from Bulletin Boards will benefit from adding a disk drive or RAM device to their computer, whether it be another Commodore disk drive, an REU, or a CMD product, there are still many options to choose from.

New technology doesn't come cheap. The CMD stock RAM devices and FD drives are priced between \$200.00 and \$250.00, and increase in price as options are added. Then again, when the 64 came out on the market 11 years ago, it wasn't cheap, either.

*Gaelene Moranec is freelance writer. Very active in the Commodore community, she is the Editor of CEE-64 Alive!, a disk magazine for Commodore 64 users, Secretary and Co-Editor for her local Commodore User's Group, and Co-Sysop on Ancient Heart BBS in Saginaw, Michigan. She can usually be found "hanging out" in the CBM FIDOnet echo. Comments or suggestions can be sent her on GENIE, addressed to G.Moranec, on Q-LINK addressed to GR Moranec, or sent in care of this publication.*

# How to Achieve **Peaceful Coexistence** with a BBS User

## **A Guide for Anyone who has a BBS'er in the House**

**I**t's not easy living with computer users. We seem like an odd bunch of characters to non-computer people, especially to our families who must share hearth and home with us. Our loved ones don't understand why we spend so much time in front of that "machine" or exactly what we do with it.



And as baffling as ordinary computer folks are, there's one breed of computer user that's especially exasperating. And that's the BBS user, or BBS'er as we like to call ourselves. You see, BBS'ers have not only commandeered the family computer (which the rest of the family doesn't understand or use or care about anyway). But BBS users have taken over that one device the rest of the family does understand and use and care about—the telephone.

It's one thing when we computer users spend all our time at the computer. It's another thing when we spend all our time on the phone. That's what leads to the family arguments, disputes, fights, and occasional exchange of gunfire.

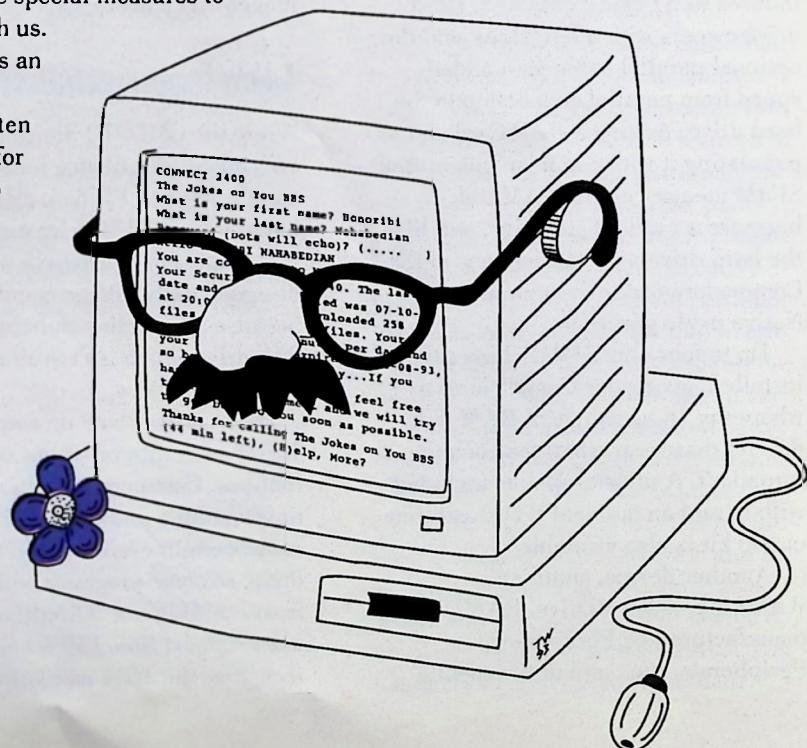
Despite the natural hostilities that

arise between BBS users and their families, the situation is not hopeless. Studies have shown that BBS users can in fact achieve peaceful coexistence with the rest of their household. Unfortunately, most BBS'ers are set in their ways. We just can't cut back on our constant BBS'ing even though it may upset and annoy the folks we live with. That's why it's up to the other people in the house to adapt to the situation. It's up to our families and loved ones to take special measures to survive with us.

So here's an article with advice written especially for people who live with BBS users. You BBS'ers out there

should pass along this column to your husband, wife, parents, children, domestic partner, old aunt who lives in the attic, or any other cohabitants.

(For the sake of simplicity, I refer to BBS users as "him" throughout this article. But these words of wisdom apply equally to husbands, sons, boyfriends, household companions, and anyone else sharing space with a female BBS'er.)



## How to Live with a BBS User in 7 Easy Steps:

**STEP 1.** Don't be surprised when you pick up the phone to make a call and discover the line is busy. The phone line is always busy. You know that. And you know why. Your household BBS'er is at it again. You must learn to accept that your phone will be tied up 95% of the time. And accept that it'll be tied up right when you need to make that crucial call...like when you've just seen your next-door neighbor profiled on "America's Most Wanted."

**STEP 2.** Don't expect your BBS user to get off the phone when you ask him. You know he'll tell you he's in the middle of a project so vital he can't hang up right now. And don't try to understand his excuses. Just accept them. You've heard them all by now. "I can't get off the phone. I'm in the middle of a trans-atlantic chat with the guy who led the march in Tienamen Square," or "I just started downloading a file that plots the location of every star in the Milky Way galaxy and it won't be finished for another six hours." Your BBS'er will inevitably offer some tangled excuse as to why he can't hang up the phone. So do yourself a favor. Don't even ask.

**STEP 3.** Try to remain calm when you see the phone bill. You know it'll be big. It's big every month. Tempting as it is, resist the urge to hit your BBS user over the head with his keyboard just because your phone bills resemble the national debt. Many people have expensive hobbies—stamp collecting, photography, buying yachts. Using a BBS doesn't cost much more than those pastimes. Of course, when your phone bills start to weigh in at over 15 pounds, you may want to reconsider that "hitting the head with the keyboard" idea.

**STEP 4.** Leave your BBS user alone when he's at the computer. Okay, maybe his activities look strange. Playing Red Baron against some guy in Detroit. Typing arcane, bizarre phrases like "AT&C1&D0E1V1QX3 &Q5." Still, don't interrupt him. As absurd as these actions are to you, they're all part

of the daily ritual of being a BBS'er. So unless there's a major emergency, like a killer asteroid headed for your kitchen, it's best to leave him alone if he's BBS'ing.

**STEP 5.** Don't question why other people refer to him as "Screaming Meanie" or "Dr. Destructo" when he's on a bulletin board. Many BBS callers adopt strange nicknames and aliases for themselves. It's part of the fun and fantasy of BBS'ing. Although if he starts referring to himself as "Screaming Meanie" in his conversations with you, then you may want to take legal action.

**STEP 6.** Don't be shocked when a friend or relative calls you on the phone and asks, "What's wrong? I was trying to get through the past five hours, but the line was busy." You know the reason. The trick is to explain it. Come up with a good excuse like, "I think someone chopped down our telephone pole." Better yet, devise an excuse that your BBS'er

might use.

"It's all that electromagnetic interference in the air. It

makes the phone sound like it's busy."

(With practice, you can learn to shovel the technobabble as well as your BBS user does.)

**STEP 7.** Share in your BBS user's glory when he discovers something exciting at the com-

puter. If he shouts, "I've made contact with the bulletin board at the Kremlin" or "I just received e-mail from someone I think is Bill Gates's cousin," don't shrug your shoulders and say, "So what?" At least acknowledge his jubilation. Even a simple "That's nice, dear" is better than nothing.

I know some of these steps require great effort and patience on the part of anyone who lives with a BBS'er. But the sacrifice is worth it to ensure a harmonious household. After all, if Russia and the United States can achieve peaceful coexistence, you may just find you can actually endure that BBS user in the house.

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# Let Your JINGLE BELLS Come From a Working Modem

## Modems Make Great Holiday Gifts!

**N**ot every computer in America has an internal or external modem attached to it... YET! In fact, if the truth were known, the marketplace for modems is to be found in millions of homes

across the USA. A new modem is always a superb gift for the holidays.

As housewives, students and Senior Citizens discover the affordability of the Personal Computer, its magical presence is slowly extending into living rooms, classrooms and places of business everywhere.

Plus, the thrilling challenge of projecting that PC electronic unit via the MODEM into far distant places, other homes and centers of learning is beginning to make a lot of dollar-CENTS and common-SENSE to many people, young and old alike. It's called Modem Magic!

### Modem Magic Paid Off for Me!

Last year during December, I got my first modem. A gift to myself. And, it literally opened "the entire world up to me." I now could talk online by keyboard to people from sunny Florida to California's golden shores. And, best of all, I never had to leave my office.

The modem allows me to download



all kinds of fun and fascinating materials. To sit at 1 am in the morning and watch pages of copy flow from Portland, Oregon into my IBM computer in Boston, Massachusetts for me is an experience "extraordinaire."

I recently completed a Florida Trivia database entitled, AMERICA'S #1 FAMILY FUN SPOT. By use of the modem, I was able to glean all sorts of interesting and intriguing trivia about Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, Epcot Center, Key West "cajun" cooking, ad infinitum. Modem Magic connected me with state and local offices in Florida who were more than happy to share the inner secrets of their great, vacationland paradise.

With this bundle of 1,000 trivia questions, thanks to my modem, I look forward to quizzing armchair-travelers who have been, or want to go to Florida "about what they really know" from Pensacola to Miami Beach.

### Modem Mastery Means Answers!!!

A few months ago, I had a real problem. In the text for a newsletter that I was preparing, I somehow locked four hyphen-looking characters (-) permanently into the body of the pages. I tried everything and everybody to remove these four little hyphens. Nothing worked. It

became a living nightmare!

After weeks of bitter frustration, I called the national manufacturer of the software program and spent hours on voice phone — trying like Lady Macbeth to rub out these vile spots. The company finally said, "We're sorry. But we can't help you. It's beyond us!" Back to square one.

Then, a friend of mine, Steve Kroll, suggested, "Let's go online with the modem and send out a national S.O.S.!" We did. A plea for help sped across the phone wires.

Four days passed. Suddenly, like out of the blue, a neatly formed outline to remove this "mark" came to me from another modem. Minutes later, my enter key clicked off the four false hyphens and my copy was clean again. He said, "You accidentally locked four frames into your text. So small, you can't even remove them. Do this and watch them disappear." And, he was right.

So when holiday gift-giving times arrive and your computer sits at home without a modem-companion, I heartily recommend that you give yourself as I did ... the gift of Modem Magic!

oooooooooooooooooooooo  
**Modem Magic connected me with state and local offices in Florida who were more than happy to share the inner secrets of their great, vacationland paradise.**

## A Modem as a Business Gift?

Patricia Greco Valentino, better known as "Patti" to her friends, has adopted a motto for the New Year ahead, THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE. She owns Greco Writing, located outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

As a professional, freelance writer, she realizes that to stay competitive and a leader in the communications field means to "to own the latest electronic equipment and stay in a state of expansion toward the marketplace."

Presently, she doesn't own a modem for her business. But, Patti feels this step into Modem Magic is just around the corner.

Patti Greco Valentino has a rich background of business experience to her credit. She entered the communications field in 1977. Her work included writing, editing and marketing. Not only did she serve as a specialist for tips and advice to various business enterprises, but also created all-types of brochures, flyers, sales manuals and advertising for prestigious east coast firms.

She worked for banks, networking groups such as ATM and start-up businesses. "I so enjoyed helping people with great ideas, but who lacked the expertise in how to get their superb ideas out to the world," she said with a warm smile on her face.

Patricia Greco Valentino is the author of a number of interesting arti-

cles, plus also serves as a "ghost writer" for professional people who wish to tap into her creative and artistic skills for important columns and print materials.

During her early years, the computer was a taboo word for a number of the small business who sought her services. She said, "For reasons of their own, these firms remained closed to computerization and chose to stick to the ever-trustworthy IBM electronic typewriter."

"They were not fully exposed to the values and benefits of the computer," she observed, "and were not willing to upgrade in any way whatsoever. I feel this was most unfortunate. My inner feelings have always been to plan and THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE."

## The Computer ... The Fax ... and Now the Modem?

In 1990, Patti launched out on her own and became a freelance, self-employed writer for the communication industry.

Her first stroke of good fortune came from the advice of a friend who was deeply involved in the computer field. He suggested to her a business format that would include an IBM PS2 with a H.P. printer, plus a host of goodies including the popular Word Perfect program.

"It was exactly what I needed and I have never had any problem with my machine. Not a bit."

Patricia  
Greco  
Valentino



Patti now utilizes a top grade H.P. 310 fax-unit too. Since she is a project person and time is a most important factor, Patti sings high praises for her fax-contacts with large corporate firms who are forced to downsize their staff, but welcome freelancers like herself who can get the jobs done easily, inexpensively and most quickly.

## To Modem or Not to Modem — That is the Question?

High on the priority list for GRECO WRITING is Patti's crusade for New Business Development. This means decision time again.

She realizes that costly, travel limitations puts a strain on her time and budget. But, to glean new business in the coming year, she must move beyond the computer and the fax-machine and into the "online modem" lifestyle.

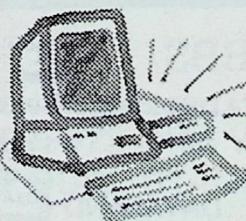
But, she has some sincere, heartfelt questions. Patti said, "Time is money with my work. And, what if learning MODEM MASTERY is too difficult, hard or time consuming? In the past with my PC, the texts were too technical, the programs too hard to understand that I threw my hands up and called my friend who supplied me with 'instant tech support, less all the grief.'

"I want to go modem like I did with my PC and fax, but I need to get my work done as well. Can MODEM MAGIC be made simple?"

Second, Patricia Greco Valentino is concerned about her small business clients. She asks, "Do they use modem services? I can clearly see how the

CONTINUES ...

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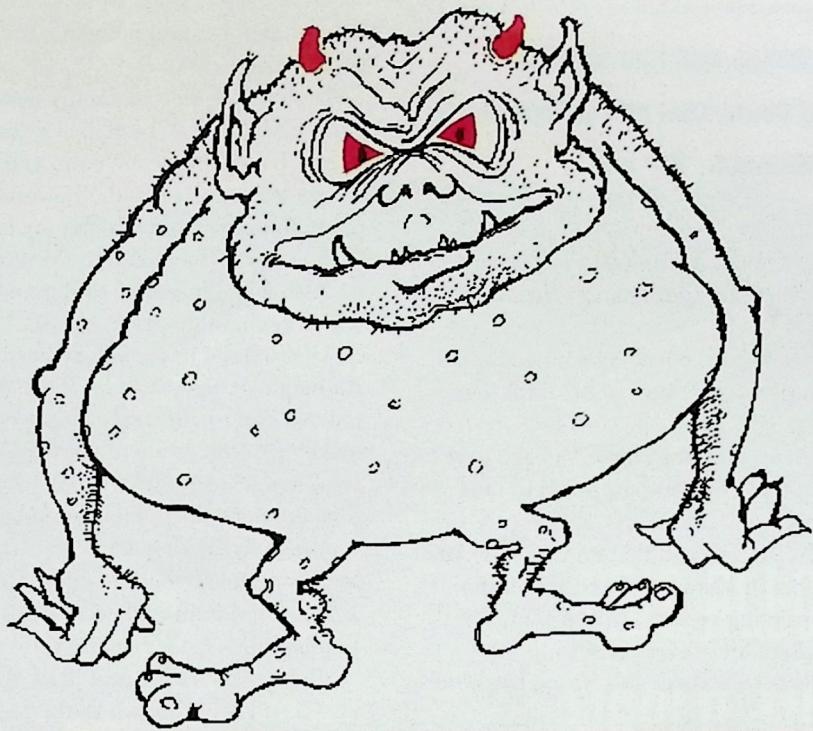
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And, that his grandfather sort of "talked funny." This later proved to be simply a state of Maine, Down East Accent!

However, in an old cemetery in Kittery, Maine during a funeral service, John Nason was introduced by the caretakers to a long list of Nason's buried in this hallowed spot by the rock bound coast of the Pine Tree state.

who were fishing on a Maine river. In midstream, an argument erupted. Suddenly, one Nason proceeded to pummel the other Nason to death with a canoe paddle. The quick ending to this fishing trip was another example of the bad 'n' good mixture in searching out one's family history.

As his research progressed, John discovered that his plethora of notes, stories, records and history began to tower up toward the ceiling. But, Nason found this voluminous pile of information could be neatly organized and saved on a computer storage disk.

He felt that he was greatly assisted by the book COMPUTER GENEALOGY by R.R. Pense of Ancestry Press, Box 476 in Salt Lake City, Utah. John adds this word of caution to genealogy seekers. He said, "Beware of mail order genealogies. So often, there is much inaccuracy and wasteful financial expense to the buyer. The best route is to do your own research!"

Also, he is indebted to Banner Blue Software company for their excellent program, FAMILY TREE MAKER.

His interest in genealogy has been further peaked by the National Archives unit in Waltham, Massachusetts. The long, tedious handwritten records such as census and death reports make easy and efficient storage on his home computer. In fact, John looks forward to the day when America's computerized files are open to "home researchers" like himself.

Recently, John made a startling discovery that only high tech equipment could resolve. He found the years from 1639 to 1790 ... and from 1993 to 1832 able to supply lots of information and the Nason records were quite complete.

But between 1790 and 1832, there was a great "family gap."

This is known as the Dead-End-Zone for researchers. The going gets slow, unless you know where to go! John turned to a modem.

He purchased an internal modem. With self-confidence, he said, "I can install this by simply following the instructions by myself." He did. And, it worked the very first time.

His next step was to go online and find forums where computer friends could look up certain facts and figures in their hometowns "for him." He did. He is. And, he will.

Today, the Nason Family Newsletter is now a dream come true. He welcomes all genealogical inquiries. For business and for pleasure ... the modem is the secret key. The perfect gift for others or yourself!

## Let's Hear Your Story!

Behind every modem ... sits a real live operator. And Callers Digest is looking for real people with real online stories. Got a problem? ... a personal happening? ... a gripe? ... a dream? ... a good or bad BBS experience?

If you are interested in being interviewed for this monthly column, please call our office at: 609-953-9110 from 10 am to 4 pm (est). Ask for Richard and the information will be forwarded to me, or write to us at: Callers Digest Inc., 701 Stokes Rd., Medford NJ 08055. DO IT TODAY!

### His next step was to go online and find forums where computer friends could look up certain facts and figures in their hometowns "for him."

They said to him, "Look over thar, John. You want Nasons? Thar's a whole hillside of them. Right thar before your eyes." And, it was true.

From that moment, his search for the heritage of people by the name of Nason became a permanent part of his thinking, working and quest in life.

One lady who also was researching the Nason lineage gave him a piece of timely advice. She said, "Be prepared to take the bad with good, and vice versa."

A short time later, John Nason learned that certain relatives of his had owned a trading post in Maine and would both rob and sell stolen goods from seagoing vessels. In short, his family tree contained some genuine, land-based Pirates.

On another occasion, he was told about two Nason brothers

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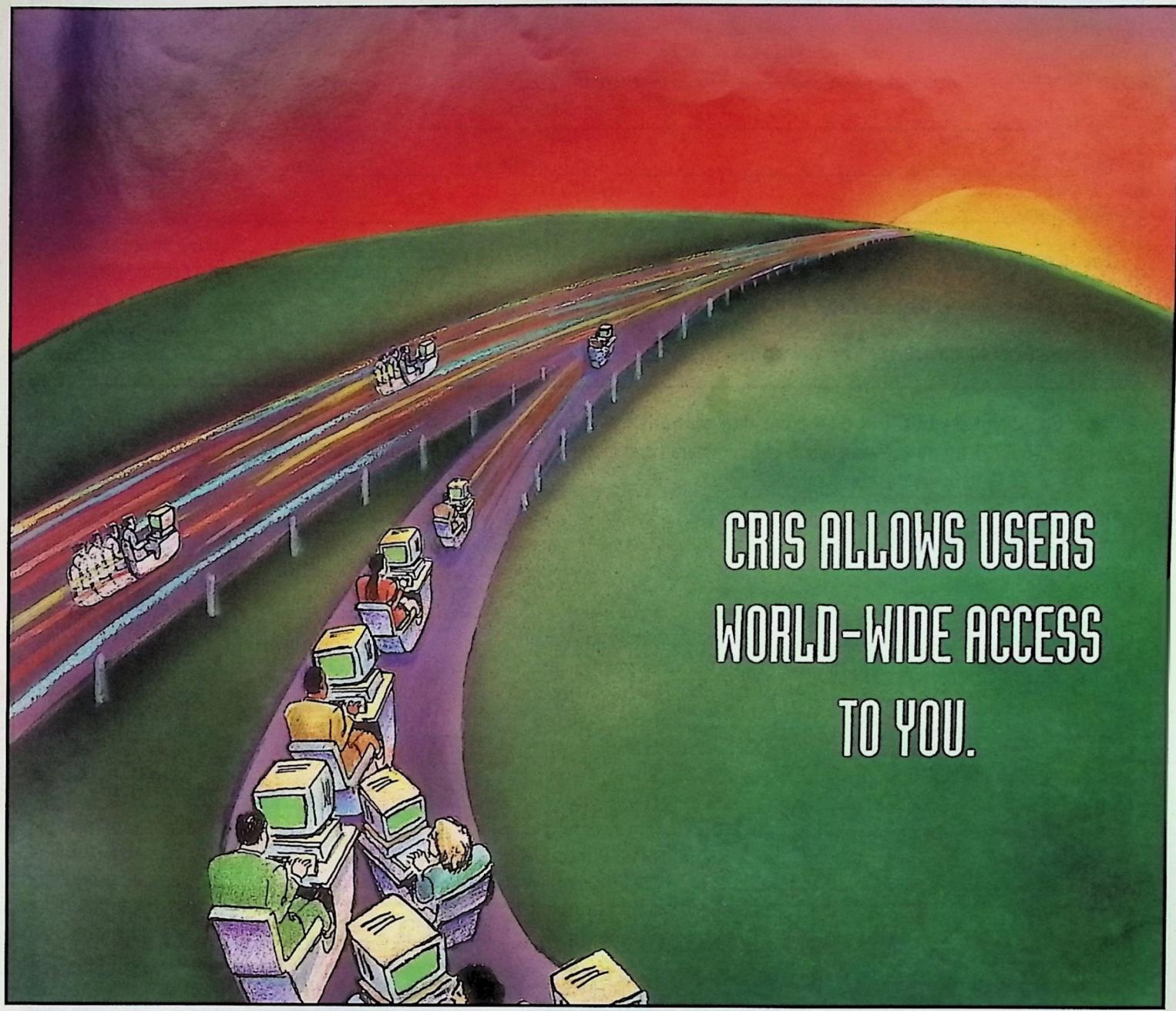
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To register and receive a copy of CD Sub Program, please fill in this form and mail with a check for \$30 payable to Richard Paquette, Box 416, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

BBS name \_\_\_\_\_

Sysop name \_\_\_\_\_ BBS access # \_\_\_\_\_

Check disk type:  360  720  1.2  1.4

Password for access on The Livewire BBS \_\_\_\_\_

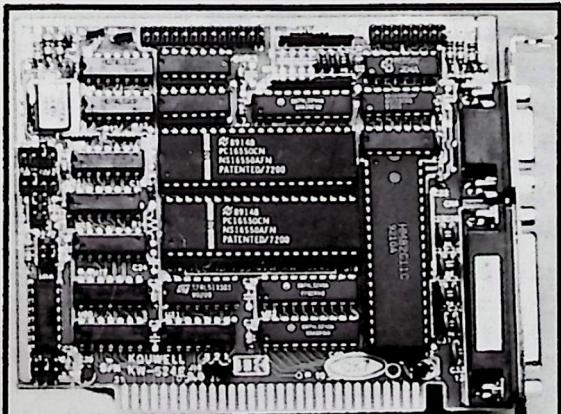
As more BBS's register the CD-SUB program, they will be listed in the next issues. Each registered bbs gets free access to The Livewire BBS 609-235-5297 for newer versions. If you registered and are not listed, please give us a voice call (1--609-953-9110, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., M - F, EST) to make the correction.

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Your Software Resource .....	John Woodstock .....	516-736-6662
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The Ghost House BBS .....	Michael Haley .....	606-441-2130

The Livewire BBS .....	Richard Paquette .....	609-235-5297
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